

21 Days

HABITS

IMPROVEMENT WORKBOOK



Coaching **Behavior** and **Motivation**
Change by the Special Services Method

A N D R E W K I T E

21-Day Habit Improvement Workbook

Coaching Behavior and Motivation Change by the
Special Forces Method of Training

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Introduction

Your achievements are important, not only in the way that you are able to reach your goals but also in the way that they can push you to new levels. Staying motivated and ready to tackle the next task is essential in anything that you do. From work life to home life, it takes a certain amount of motivation in order to do the bare minimum. Think about how your entire life can be heightened when you push yourself just a little bit further. Finding sources of inspiration to support these productive habits can be difficult, especially when you are already in a limited mindset. Many people feel that they cannot change their productivity levels because they are too busy or do not have enough resources. The truth is, anyone can do it when they apply specific training methods to their lives.

Through actionable steps, this guide is meant to show you how you can apply this kind of change to your own life. No matter what you are going through or how busy your current schedule is, these 21 habits are going to transform you into a productive person who is able to accomplish twice as much as you are accomplishing now. Because this is a workbook, you will be able to see realistic ways that you can create your new habits, allowing you to feel that you are actually making progress. Many other guides provide the same promises but end up filled with gimmicks and the same methods that you have already tried in the past. This one is different because it only focuses on the most realistic approaches.

These methods are not proven to work for regular people, but they are the same methods that the U.S. military's Special Forces uses to train their soldiers and operators. Because it is a military-derived strategy for creating more productivity, it is full of self-discipline that you can use to keep you on track. When making any kind of lifestyle change, commitment is necessary. It can be easy to try certain things for short periods of time, only to abandon them because they become too difficult or do not feel that they fit into your everyday life. The habits that you will learn are going to show you that they are here to stay, not only some temporary fad that will lead you back to your old ways in a few months' time.

Working on yourself is a process; it is not something that happens overnight. For this reason, having an actionable plan that you can execute is important. When you have a plan, you will be able to stay focused on

your final result. A lot of people make the mistake of venturing toward changes but fail to actually follow a plan. Planning is a very important aspect of self-transformation and of life in general. When you plan, you are organized, and being organized means you are able to function better. Your brain can stay one step ahead instead of constantly having to feel that you are playing catch-up.

By following step-by-step instructions, you will be given a clear plan to follow. Because it is a plan that can work for anyone, you are able to make modifications in order to best apply the plan to your own life. While some changes might be necessary, you will find that you are given an abundance of alternatives. Nothing in your life is going to feel lacking or missing when you are working on changing your habits. Instead, you will likely feel more fulfilled than you did originally. It is amazing what having a clear direction for yourself can do in terms of improving your motivation and productivity.

In terms of my personal devotion to the topic, I am an evangelist of continuous self-development. My name is Andrew Kite, and I am a life coach who incorporates both business and personal life into my teaching. Over the last several years, I have worked for leading international companies that focus on management and consulting. In 2009, I first discovered my love for coaching. I have since been driven by this productive approach to helping people improve their lives. I have certifications in professional coaching.

Many people ask me why I utilize this Special Forces method in my teachings. Before I went to college, I took 8 years of my life and devoted it to the American Armed Forces. The last 5 of those years were in a Special Forces intelligence division. All 8 years of my service was a time of great growth for me, and it was due to the skills that I was taught. I knew that I would like to revisit these skills in the years to come and this eventually led me to the idea of using them to coach others. This guide is filled with some of the very best tips and tricks that I have learned over those years, the ones that truly help people. In my experience, they work so well because they turn into habits. When you are able to see productivity as permanent, it will become less likely to fade away in the future.

Working chronologically, you will be able to see how the approach can truly work for you. Each week, you will be given new methods to try and it will become habit-building by ensuring that you are still utilizing all of

the methods that you have already been given. This is a building block approach that has proven to deliver some of the best results I have ever seen. It is an approach that I personally follow and apply to my daily life. Changing your habits does not have to be a stressful experience. When you break things down into daily steps, you will find that change is something you look forward to. As you learn the methods, you will be able to compare your progress and have a reason to truly feel proud of yourself for devoting your time toward something that is not only productive but healthy.

Chapter 1:

The 1st Week

Arguably the most important week of them all, the very first week of changing your lifestyle will set the foundation for your future success. While these methods can seem basic in some ways, they are truly solid habits to take on. When you have a stable foundation, you will be able to build on it more and more. As you are working through each habit, remember to apply them to your daily life. Try not to see them as abstract concepts because immersion is truly the best way to begin your process of change and transformation.

Day 1: Get a Better Start to Your Day

Waking up earlier is what your main focus is going to be. It is a reasonable request, but can often feel like a real burden, especially when you are very busy. Let's face it, who isn't busy? Most of us have personal lives, professional lives, and required moments of alone time to fit into one schedule. In order to get anything done, you need to make the time for it. Most people value their sleep a lot, some even stating that they cannot bear to lose sleep because they will not be able to function properly. What you must remember is that you are trying to form healthier habits. Think about waking up earlier as a way to make you more productive, rather than a way to limit your sleep.

The most realistic way to wake up earlier is by going to bed earlier. In order to do this, you need to make sure that your mind is quiet when you are trying to go to bed. The urge to look at screens, whether it be your phone or television, can actually cause you to have insomnia. Though you might not be staying awake for hours on end, looking at these screens encourages your brain to stay alert and active. It creates unnecessary hype when you truly need to be doing the exact opposite. Knowing how to really wind down before bed is going to be the key to actually getting to bed on time.

If you don't have one already, make sure that you are following a regular sleep schedule. Even if the time that you go to bed fluctuates, it is a good idea to aim for a solid 8 hours of sleep each night. This will allow you to feel truly rejuvenated and rested in the morning. Hold yourself

accountable for the fact that you need to create a restful atmosphere in order to actually get rest. Get rid of the distractions and find new ways to calm yourself down. Reading or writing can be a great way to navigate your mind toward a more restful place. You can even try meditating right before you go to sleep. Anything that promotes relaxation is a great place to begin with.

One of the biggest misconceptions about waking up earlier is the thought that it must be done in extreme ways. You don't need to wake up before the sun rises in order to receive the benefits of waking up earlier. This step can be accomplished gradually. Try setting your alarm for 10 minutes earlier on day 1. This should seem like a very minor change, but you can do a lot with the additional time that you did not have before. Each day, you can keep waking up earlier and earlier, using 10-minute increments of time. This is one way to avoid shocking your system while also showing your body that the pattern is changing.

Keep in mind that the average sleep cycle lasts for 90 minutes. You are going to cycle through around 5 stages of sleep, assuming you are in a deep sleep. NREM, or non-rapid eye movement sleep, makes up the first 4 stages of sleep. When you get to the 5th stage, you will be in REM sleep (rapid eye movement). In theory, you can get enough sleep in 5 hours because researchers have concluded that stages 3 & 4 can be combined. The trick to the 5-hour night of sleep is falling asleep quickly. If your body is in a proper state of rest, you are going to get the sleep you need and feel rested when you wake up 5 hours later. You can test yourself by setting a 5-hour alarm and seeing how you feel.

When you get out of bed, make your bed. A lot of us roll out of bed and leave the house without a second thought. Believe it or not, this is altering your overall level of accomplishment. It's another very minor detail, but it can lead to some major productivity. A deliberate action is taken; making your bed starts your day off with motivation. You will have accomplished a task before you even get ready for the day to come. This will get you in the right mindset to take on the tasks ahead. It is also a great way to get you thinking about your morning routine as a whole. Think about the ways it serves you. Are there any things that you can change in order to improve it?

Many of us find ourselves struggling to make it out the door each morning. When you leave the house this way, you will find that you are

cluttered and disorganized throughout the rest of the day. The tone with which you start your day is truly going to map out the pattern that you will follow. If you are tired of feeling like you just can't catch up, see what you can do with your extra time in the morning. Use it to better serve your morning routine. Whether you need to devote that time to eating a healthy breakfast or to allowing yourself more time to get ready, you can think of this time as flexible. By using your instincts, you will decide where you must apply it.

Changing your sleep schedule can be very hard, especially if you tend to take home stressors from your day. Remember to leave them right where they are. There is no need to take home stress that belongs at work or to bring stress from home into the workplace. This is a tiring cycle that only drags you down. When you cannot do anything about a problem at the moment, there is no need to hold onto that negativity. Learning to let go is one way to get a better night's rest. If you are able to let go of the things you cannot change, you will feel a lot happier and at ease.

Do your best to hold yourself accountable for the sleep that you do get. Know that everything leading up to the moments before bed have an impact on the rest that you will be getting. If you load up on sugar and caffeine too close to bedtime, you will recognize that this is a habit that must change in order to maintain a better sleeping habit. Do what is best for your mind and body because both are essential to maintaining a productive lifestyle. If you wake up and snooze your alarm several times, this can also become a detrimental practice. Teach your body that your alarm is a signal that it is time to get up. When you are able to stop relying on the snooze button, you will be able to wake up and get into a productive mood rather than drag out the few sporadic minutes of sleep that you are trying to get in. The snooze button simply resets your internal clock, causing you to feel more tired.

Day 2: Learn Common Codes

While day 1 consisted of some tips that are commonplace knowledge, day 2 promises to be more of a challenge. On this day, you need to teach yourself Morse code. Unexpected but useful, learning Morse code is a way to truly engage your brain in a brand new way. Keeping your brain sharp is one way to keep your brain productive. You might feel very much out of your element when you take on this task, but know that it is possible with the right approach. Don't let the complexity of the goal trick you into thinking that you are not capable of it. We can all benefit by using our brains more, as we have a lot of unused brain capacity.

Knowing Morse code is actually beneficial in today's modern world. Since the first message was sent over 175 years ago, communication has evolved rapidly. By getting in touch with the roots of communication, you will be able to have a better appreciation for the at-your-fingertips style of communication that is accessible today. Considering what you can do with Morse code today proves an interesting point. Because the signals are fairly simple, you can actually express them by blinking. Imagine being in a terrible situation where you are unable to vocalize or escape. Sending a message by Morse code while only utilizing your blinking can be life-saving.

Alternatively, you can also use Morse code when you have a flashlight. If you were to get lost in the woods, equipped with only minimal supplies, Morse code can once again save your life. It is a very powerful thought that this very basic form of communication can serve such a high purpose in this modern society. It can be very useful and this is one reason why you should encourage yourself to think outside of the box and learn the language. If you don't know where to begin, do some research. There are several resources available online that guide you through step-by-step actions you can take in order to teach yourself Morse code.

Think about this as your new personal project and treat it with as much value as a work assignment. When you take yourself seriously, you are going to see serious results. Many people second-guess this step, believing that it will have no benefit to them. At the very least, consider how amazing it is that you can teach yourself something obscure and brand new. Your brain is a lot more capable than you realize, and like any other part of your body, you must exercise it in order to keep it in prime shape.

When your brain is clouded with stress or other negativity, it can become extremely hard to stay focused on anything else.

Learning Morse code does have practical benefits, but it also gives you a way to really challenge yourself and to pay attention to your style of learning. You will quickly find that certain methods of learning are going to work better for you than others. Some people are visual learners, while others prefer auditory instructions. Knowing about your learning style is going to also help you in the future when you must learn other new skills. When you can focus on the learning style that you already know works best, you will be able to save a lot of time on trial and error and instead focus on the task at hand.

People insist that Morse code is fairly simple, but just how simple is it? The code is made up of signals that are differentiated by long or short and on or off. For example, taking the English alphabet into account, the letter E is used most frequently and it is represented by a dot in Morse code. The letter Z is used least frequently, so it is represented by dash-dash-dot-dot. Thinking about how you would spell out a word, you can see that the code can be easily grasped if you are able to memorize the alphabet. Once you get the hang of how to communicate with each letter, you can practice spelling out different words.

Much like learning any other foreign language, practice makes perfect. Memorization is only one part of truly mastering the language. Go beyond memorizing the letters of the alphabet in Morse code. You can research different encrypted messages online in order to really put your skills to the test. Challenge yourself by seeing how many you can translate. Also, write your own messages and try to express them by using a flashlight and blinking. Being comprehensive with your approach to learning Morse code will allow you to fully immerse yourself in it.

Another interesting code that you can teach yourself about is the Enigma Machine code. The brilliant mathematician Alan Turing is best known for cracking the Enigma code. This machine was used by the German armed forces to send secret messages securely during World War II. Enigma's cipher system was altered daily, making it even harder to crack than the stationary code would be. During the 1940s, Turing and his fellow code-breaker Gordon Welchman created a device to help with this decoding task. Their machine, known as the Bombe, helped to significantly reduce the work that both code-breakers had to do.

This is a captivating story that many people do not know in detail. It goes hand in hand with the idea that you can teach yourself Morse code. By doing research on both Morse code and the Enigma Machine, you are challenging the way that you think. Instead of only seeing what you know to be true, expand your knowledge in order to teach your brain that there are limitless sources of knowledge for you to explore. You will find it very fulfilling when you realize that there aren't very many people who know about these topics today, let alone people who actually devote time to learning about them.

Day 2 allows you to take the initiative in a big way. It is an action that you likely would never take on your own and it allows you to think in a new way. This is very beneficial for your brain and you should aim to take on more tasks like it. Show yourself that you are capable of completing complex tasks and you will realize that you will have more self-confidence in all of your abilities.

Day 3: Expanding on Language

While you got warmed up with new languages on day 2, you are going to continue on this same path during day 3. Your aim will be to learn a new spoken language. For this task, you can tap into your interests to decide on which language you would like to learn. Most of us are always “wishing” that we could learn a new language, but stop to think about why you can’t. The only thing standing in your way is yourself when it comes to learning any new skill. Take that wishful thinking and turn it into a more productive mindset. Commit to the fact that you are going to learn a new language of your choosing.

Learning any language becomes a useful skill because it enhances your ability to communicate with more people. Thinking about the perspective of the Special Forces, they train their soldiers to learn multiple languages in order to make them more valuable assets. Equipped with such skills, soldiers have opportunities to gain intelligence by understanding what others are saying or doing—often without their knowledge that they have been overheard. Many people learn languages for fun, and it is one of the best things that you can do for your brain, especially as an adult. We become so used to what is typically expected of us, rarely challenging these guidelines. By choosing to learn a new language, you are giving yourself some essential time to grow as a person.

There might be several languages that you’ve always wanted to learn, and you can learn them all! Focusing on one language at a time, however, is going to allow you to achieve real progress and results. Think about a culture that you would like to become immersed in. Whether you have always wanted to go to a certain foreign country or you have different cultures that genuinely interest you, this is how you can narrow down which language you’d like to tackle. Having a greater purpose when learning a language will place a necessary feeling of responsibility on you. When you know that you are learning the language for a reason, as well as for fun, you will be able to stay more motivated while doing so.

Once you have selected your language, you can get started right away. It doesn’t take a lot of money or effort in order to begin with basic conversational skills. Your first step is to learn the alphabet of the given language that you are teaching yourself. All of this information should be relatively easy to access from the internet. If you prefer, you can also

obtain some books to help you. By taking an hour out of each day, you will be able focus on this task at hand. Learn the alphabet and try your best to memorize all of the letters. Understand how the alphabet works and how to form sentences. Not every language is going to be comparable to English. Getting rid of that idea is going to make this process a lot easier for you.

As you become more familiar with the alphabet, you can learn common words and phrases that are considered essential to learning the language. Think about the things that you would need to know if you were a visitor to the country. Being able to ask how to get around and how to fulfill your basic needs is a start. This is also something that you can do on your own, but if you prefer, you can start an actual language learning course. Online isn't your only option. While there are many interactive ways that you can learn languages online, don't forget that you can also learn them in person through lessons or tutors. Getting back into a classroom setting is likely one of the last things that you would have expected for yourself, but it can create many positive benefits for your life.

Knowing that you will have to study in order to truly learn the language will put you into a focused mindset. This will not only allow you to become successful with your goal but also your other goals. Remaining stagnant is a common sign of laziness or boredom. When you don't put any effort into your mundane tasks, you are actually selling yourself short. Learning a new language aims to open up this way of thinking for you again. While you might not be tested under pressure, you are still going to be thinking critically and using some parts of your brain that have not been utilized in a long time. Think about this as a way of getting a jumpstart on your productivity.

Learning a language is the gathering of new information. Even if you are taking small steps each day, you are going to be learning something new. When was the last time that you learned something new? It is important to keep your curiosity alive. As you have solidified your routine, it seems that these opportunities seldom come unless you seek them. Your goal is to become more of a seeker. Search for the answers and try to make it a point to allow yourself to discover more. Critical thinking is based on how much you know. By expanding your base knowledge, it makes sense that your critical thinking skills will also be improved.

One of the best feelings of accomplishment that you can give to yourself is the ability to converse with someone who speaks the language. After you become conversational, challenge yourself even further! Reach out to people you know, or even complete strangers, for some opportunities to put your new skills to the test. This is one way of guiding yourself into asking for more out of life. Speaking in a new language is one part learning and another part doing. You need to make sure that you have learned the correct information, and there is no better way to find out than putting it to the test with others who are more experienced. This feeling of accomplishment is going to drive you in your daily life. While you might not be able to control the stressors around you, your progress with your new language should be enough to keep you reaching for more.

Day 4: Get Moving

It is no secret that getting enough exercise is essential to maintaining any lifestyle. Your body needs this time to move and to get fit. Another way to become stagnant is by remaining still. Whether you have had a fitness routine in the past or you wish to improve your current routine, know that the benefits are going to serve you well as you aim for learning better habits. Spies and soldiers need to be in prime physical condition in order to complete their duties. This concept is no different than a regular person living a lifestyle that involves many components. While you are focused on your work and personal life for the majority of your day, you still need to take some time for yourself and your own improvement.

Soldiers regularly complete basic exercises such as push-ups and sit-ups. These keep the body's core strong while also simultaneously working out the rest of the body. Running drills are also great to get the heart pumping. You might have to push yourself outside of your comfort zone, but that is the goal! Research different exercises that soldiers must complete on a daily basis, and use this as your inspiration for creating your own workout routine.

If you feel that you do not have time for exercise, it is simply because you aren't handling your time management as you should. There will always be time for things that are important, as long as you are ready and willing to make room for them. Take a look at your schedule hour by hour. It is guaranteed that you can find a 30-minute block of time that you can devote to your physical health. If it seems too overwhelming, you can pair the task of day 1 with this task. You can wake up earlier and use that time to get your exercise in. This is a matter of preference, but many believe that starting the day off with regular exercise allows them to have more productive weeks. If you prefer to use exercise as your winding down time, you can also do this. Do what feels right for yourself and your lifestyle!

With all of these daily tasks that you will be given, you will notice a pattern—you still need to make choices. Making choices is a very healthy skill that you need to master. Life is full of choices, and indecision can lead you down the path to being stagnant. Once you have selected a time that you would like to devote to your exercising, think about all of the different activities that you can do. Not everybody enjoys going to the

gym, but some people find it relaxing. Try to focus on what you would truly enjoy doing in order to get your physical fitness up to speed. If there are any classes that you have been curious about, sign up! Now is the time to have these new experiences.

Having accountability is important. When you commit to your time and your exercise of choice, stick with it! Only you are going to be able to make this happen with self-discipline. A lot of people find it easier to do this when they have a support system and this can be an option for you. Find someone who you would like to exercise with you on a regular basis. When you have another person who is also devoting their time to fitness, you will be able to use this as additional motivation. Without letting yourself down and without letting this person down, you will be more willing to push forward and exercise, even on the days when you truly don't want to. Changing this habit isn't easy for most, but it does come with many benefits.

When you exercise regularly, you will also be able to sleep more regularly. If you find yourself awake late into the night, this is likely because your body is still wired with energy. Getting in the right amount of exercise is important so that this energy has an outlet. You will feel a lot better when you try to rest at night if your mind and body are clear of this excess energy—not to mention, it will also be easier for you to wake up earlier. When you can improve the quality of your sleep, this will also improve the overall quality of your life. Getting into your exercise routine can seem tiring in the beginning, but you will quickly see that it can become a regular part of your life that will actually provide you with additional energy.

Working out also means that you are generating more endorphins for yourself. Endorphins keep you happy and can often stabilize your moods. When you are able to push yourself to exercise, you will reach that plateau of feeling great. This is a feeling that you will begin to long for in a healthy way. Operating with plenty of endorphins feels great as opposed to dragging your feet through your days. With a happy mindset, you are going to have more opportunities for positive thinking. This surge in positivity is going to impact every aspect of your life.

From the ways that you are able to communicate with others to the eating habits that you decide to take on, physical fitness is definitely the core of this all. While you might not know exactly how you'd like to

change your lifestyle at first, a few weeks of working out regularly will showcase exactly what you need more of. You will begin to feel like a more well-rounded person when you are able to stick to this new routine. Even on the days when you once felt like staying at home and doing nothing, you will see that there is a new craving forming—to get up and get moving.

No matter what you do for a living, exercise can become a therapeutic way to remind you to keep your work at work. You can encounter an unlimited number of stressors each day, but that does not mean that you have to bring them home with you. Use your time to exercise as a way to let go of all these things. Show yourself that you value your own well-being enough to release the things that you cannot change. This can be easier said than done, but once you accomplish it, you will see that it is essential. Try not to hold onto anything stressful while you exercise. Instead, use that time to focus on yourself and your own needs. If your mind starts to wander, guide it back in the right direction.

Day 5: Manage Your Finances

Knowing how much money you have and how much money you need in order to maintain all of your expenses is essential. There is nothing worse than discovering that you do not have enough money to cover your expenses. Unfortunately, this can happen when you are living your life with an unfocused mind. Expenses can get away from anyone, but this habit can also become dangerous when you have more bills due than what you can cover. Take a look at the way you manage your money. Even if you are able to pay your bills on time and cover your general needs, are you still making sure that you are setting some money aside for savings?

You never know what is going to happen in life, and being one step ahead of things financially is a smart strategy to take on. Even if you don't anticipate additional expenses, you should still prepare for them. Many people do not have enough savings to cover an emergency situation, and you need to motivate yourself in order to not become another statistic. By taking 10% of your paycheck and devoting it to your savings account, you will be able to watch this money blossom. Whether this seems like a small amount or a large amount to you, try to think about things from another perspective. Any money saved is better than no money being saved. While you might have to adjust how much you spend each month to accommodate this, you will be glad that you did.

Thinking about why this is important for a spy or soldier in the Special Forces, agencies are going to prefer agents without debt. If you have debt, you know how much this can weigh you down. Not only does it limit your opportunities in a professional sense, but it can really do a lot to bring your mood down. Having the thought of debt hanging over your head isn't a good feeling and it can lead you to feel trapped. By showing that you can manage your expenses without going into debt, you will prove that you are organized and motivated when it comes to your finances.

Another interesting way to look at debt is that it is essentially something that can be used against soldiers as blackmail. When you have less of a paper trail, there is less that others can use against you. While you might feel like this does not apply to your own life, it can still affect you in similar ways. Getting out of debt is like allowing yourself freedom. The only person who can do it is yourself, so it also becomes a test of

motivation and determination. You know your own financial situation best, so you should be able to think of some ways that you can improve it.

For day 5, keep a tally of how much you spend each day. Make sure to note what category each purchase falls under. When you have this on paper, you will be able to better examine all of the information. Where is most of your money going, and why? Is there any way that you can adjust your lifestyle in order to save more money? This can appear in simple solutions such as eating out less or being more conservative with where you are spending your money. Make it a point to apply some changes to this pattern. Without any changes, you aren't going to experience any progress.

Once you see where your financial weaknesses are, you will be able to turn them into strengths. Another helpful step would be to meet with a financial advisor. They will be able to look at the overall picture and guide you in the right direction. Think about opening a new savings account or investing your money. What you spend money on right now that does not serve you is only money lost. Know what your essentials are and don't stray too far away from them. For certain people, it can be very difficult to save money. With all of the temptations that surround us at all times, spending money might be second nature at this point. This is a habit that you must change.

Make a savings goal and try to contribute to it weekly. Every penny counts, and before you know it, your efforts are going to come together to make a difference. Take smaller actions daily, as well. Do you buy coffee every day when you can make it at home instead? These little things are what you need to identify in order to become better with your finances. Yet another example of goal-setting, becoming better with your money is not only a personal victory but a very important aspect of your life. Much like the other habits in this workbook, this one is also going to lead you to a more organized life overall. When you have a handle on your money, this puts you in a position of power. Don't be afraid to use this power as a way to boost your self-confidence.

Try to keep things in the right perspective by knowing the difference between your wants and your needs. Your needs are non-negotiable. These are the things that you cannot survive without, such as housing and food. When you look at your needs this way, you will realize that there are only a handful of things that you truly need. Next, take a look at your

happiness. What do you need in order to be happy? This is when you can allow for some spending on recreation and fun, but it is still possible to save while having these small indulgences. Your wants come last, but they are still there. You might want something very badly, but you will need to weigh out the pros and cons before you commit to making a purchase.

Day 6: Train Your Memory

On day 6, your focus will be shifting to another very useful skill to know—remembering your conversations. By being a very attentive listener, you will be able to remember all of the details of every conversation that you have. You might be wondering why this is necessary or even productive. There are actually a couple of benefits that you will experience when you put your effort into recalling past conversations that you've had. For one, being a better listener improves your relationships with those you speak to. Being personable is highly undervalued, but it will get you very far in life. When someone feels that they can talk to you and that you truly care about what they have to say, you are forming a connection with this person.

Most of the time, people do not want you to listen just to provide a reaction in return. What they want is someone who will hear them. If you can remember this, you will be taking your first step toward fine-tuning your memory and recalling past conversations that you've had. For a Special Forces operator, recalling past conversations is a very useful skill for the purpose of picking out the finer details. If you can put a lot of small details together, you might be able to see a brand-new bigger picture. Everyone in life could benefit from being a better listener.

No matter if you are talking to your loved ones or complete strangers, listen to what everyone has to say. When you display this kind of behavior, you will also be more likely to receive it in return. It is a nice feeling when you can share that mutual display of respect with others. Even if you never intend to become a spy who needs to rely on these details for future analysis, you will still be able to access these memories in order to use them to your advantage. Not only will others know that you are truly listening to what they are saying, but when you can bring up reference points, this automatically builds trust.

When a spy is out in the field, time is limited. There is only one chance to hear a conversation or even a snippet of a conversation. It is with the power of their highly trained memories that they are able to absorb and remember this information. Test yourself regularly. When you meet new people, make sure that you are truly acknowledging their names and who they are. It can be hard to remember this simple information when you are meeting a lot of people at once, but do your best to start

putting your focus there. If you can remember someone's basic identity, then you will be more likely to remember specific details about them.

You might wonder, why not take notes? Taking notes is another useful skill, but it helps your memory develop more when you are able to recall the details without needing to rely on notes. Those who work as spies or soldiers do not have time to take notes. Not only is there no time, but it is also not a great idea to leave a trail of all the things you know. Your memory is a very vital tool, whether you are working as a spy or simply trying to improve your everyday brain function. When you know that you want to remember something, that is your chance to fully engage your listening skills. Repeating factual information as you speak to someone can also be a great way to commit it to memory. It also shows the other person that you are fully engaged.

Your memory is unique. While some people are great at remembering visual details, others are more able to remember auditory ones. Figure out how your memory operates and what you are most receptive to. If possible, group certain information together in order to better remember it. Some people like to remember things chronologically, while others find that grouping similar information is more valuable. You will learn about yourself as you attempt to discover just how unique your own memory can be. When you find the methods that work for you, the details should stay fresh. Hours after having a conversation with someone, revisit the details and see how many you can remember off the top of your head. Then, spend some time concentrating deeply to access your deeper memories. See if you are able to remember anything else.

The brain tends to remember information that is seemingly valuable or interesting. When you are listening attentively, you need to send signals to your brain that this is information that is worth remembering. This takes a certain sense of focus and optimism. If you can get your brain engaged by doing this, you will have an easier time remembering the details that you want to hold onto. Even if you are not actively having a conversation with someone, you can practice building your memory by using basic flashcards or matching games. These are great brain exercises, and although basic, they will allow you to keep working on your memory even when you are alone.

Before you know it, you will have a lot of brand new information to use as you wish. As you collect more memories, your brain is also seeing

that it has a lot more capacity. What you do each day should be committed to memory. Think about what the sky looked like as you drove to work or how many red lights you were stopped at. Remember the banter between your coworkers and the conversations shared with your loved ones. Think about all of the food that you ate throughout the day, snacks included. Your mind is going to be incredibly active in the best way possible. Others will be wondering what your secret is.

Chapter 2:

Reflections on Week 1

At this point, you have been through nearly an entire week of new habit-forming behaviors. These tasks were given to you because you are capable of completing them. They exercise many different parts of your brain, allowing you the time to begin your growth as a person. Collecting useful habits does not end here. You are going to continue building on these habits, adding 2 more weeks of activities for you to try. Take a moment to reflect on how you feel since engaging in this new lifestyle. You probably have some lingering feelings about the tasks you were given.

Some of these tasks were likely big hits, while others might not have given you the satisfaction that you wanted—this is okay. You have your own preferences and personality, so there is no need to pretend that you absolutely loved every minute of completing these tasks. The point is that you were supposed to feel challenged. When you can agree to step outside of your comfort zone, you are already making big progress toward your goals. Breaking free of the constructs that you currently reside in can ultimately give you a lot of freedom.

Focus on the things that you loved doing. What did you like about these tasks and why? This is a period where you are able to do a lot of necessary self-discovery, so use it wisely. There is no need to censor yourself or to pretend that you like something when you don't. This workbook is meant to help you become the best version of yourself, and only you know exactly how you feel about the process. Remember how these tasks made you feel, and try to seek out more activities that replicate this feeling. The world has limitless options for you, so make sure that you are taking advantage of them at all times.

Talk about your progress with someone you know and trust. Though you are the one in control of making your own decisions, it can still help to discuss these things with other people. You might be able to receive additional encouragement and input from your loved ones as you explain why you are doing these new things. Saying what you are doing out loud also reinforces it; when you speak things into existence, this makes them more real. Through being open about your journey, you might even inspire others in your life to go on a similar journey of their own. The people that you spend the most time with have the most influence on you, so being

around other self-motivated people is only going to further help your cause. Plus, it is nice to be in the company of those who can relate to you.

As you set your sights on the week to come, think about what direction you would like to take in terms of making the habits stick. You've now had a taste of a few different tasks and various methods of how to complete them. Keeping this in mind, set your intentions for the next few days. Think about what you are personally going to do in order to commit yourself fully to the next tasks that you are given. Find your best working environment and think about ways that you can better schedule your time. While each week of your life is going to be different, you still need to make sure that there is enough time to complete each task that you are given.

Day 7 is going to focus heavily on scheduling and time management. These are two necessary life skills, no matter what you are doing or what you have going on in your life. When you have enough self-discipline to form a schedule for yourself, even when it doesn't seem necessary, you are going to keep a level of motivation present at all times. This motivation should never leave you. It should be something that you can always seek out, relying on it when you feel that you cannot push forward anymore. You'd be surprised at how motivated you can stay when you simply shift your focus.

Day 7: Becoming a Master of Your Tasks

No matter what you are planning on accomplishing in a day, you need a certain level of organization in order to properly execute it. You need to aim for as much productivity as possible, whether you set out to get through a workday or a weekend day. Always having something to do is going to keep you moving and will allow your mindset to remain positive always. There is a lot of power behind positive thinking. Many people become overwhelmed when they have several tasks at hand, but if you can take this anxiety and transform it into the real effort, you are going to feel more and more at ease with each accomplishment you make.

Not only are you going to learn about the ultimate tools that will lead you toward productivity, but you are also going to learn about the neuroscience behind them. There is a reason why being productive feels so good, and you will realize that it can become a great feeling to hold onto as much as you can. These tools are meant to work for you, so you need to truly work with them until you find the methods that are applicable to your own life. This part does take some creativity, but once you find the right schedule for yourself, you will be even more successful than ever before.

Scheduling

Before you begin each day, ideally the night before, make sure that you have your schedule in order. Your schedule is a guideline to your day and it will always give you a reason to keep moving forward. While you can't schedule every single thing that you will go through in a day, you can account for the things that you are already aware of. Make sure that you write down all of your important appointments or tasks. This is going to keep them present in your mind. You will also be able to schedule the rest of your lower-priority tasks around these higher-priority ones. Make sure that you have enough time to get everything done. If you have two important meetings scheduled at the same time, you are going to be spreading yourself thin, having to sacrifice one of these meetings. Use your common sense to figure out a way to fit everything into your day without overloading yourself.

Alongside your schedule, you can also make to-do lists to keep you even more on track. Your to-do list can be used for those items that are

more simple, such as going to the grocery store or completing various errands before you get home from work. Many people find tremendous value in to-do lists, utilizing them every single day. If you have never made one before, sit down and take the time to think about what you really need to get done. No matter what that task is or how simple it might seem, put it on your list. Being able to place a checkmark next to each task is going to motivate you, a small victory toward the overall goal.

Your schedule is going to make your life more efficient. If you have ever had those days where you just feel like you can't catch up, you will know how great an efficiently-planned day can be. By being able to get all of your tasks done each day, you are continuously proving to yourself that you are great at time management. This will help you when you must add unexpected things to your schedule. You can't plan for every single thing, but you can have some wiggle room in order to allow yourself the time to do these random tasks that you are faced with. A lot of people tend to crack under this pressure, completely deviating from their schedules. You will have a lot of strength in knowing that your schedule is what will get you through this day, so for that reason, try to make sure that you are staying true to it.

There are many different ways to keep your schedule. You can do this physically by writing in a planner, or you can download an app that will keep all of this information on your phone for you. No matter which method you prefer, try to always have your schedule with you. If someone wants to set up an appointment with you, it helps to know what time you have free. This will also eliminate your risk of overbooking or double-booking yourself. By having your schedule with you at all times, you will also be able to better remember it. Memorizing your schedule should be something that you aim to do each week. It will keep everything fresh in your mind, and when you are thinking about it, you should feel an extra boost of motivation to complete it.

Poor scheduling can actually become a costly bad habit. If you aren't organized, you might be missing out on opportunities or having to choose between valuable experiences simply because you didn't schedule your day properly. When you experience these setbacks, you might be losing money. This is especially true when it comes to scheduling your workdays. If you are tired of feeling this way, there is time to change this habit for the better. You won't have to choose between the things that you want and

need; you will be able to do both because you allowed yourself enough time to get everything done. Think about ways that you can revamp your current schedule. If you do not keep track of it on paper or with an app, start immediately.

When you are able to complete your tasks at work and tend to your responsibilities, you will actually have the chance to improve your home life. If there is something pending at work, it can be very distracting once you are finally at home. During times that you should be resting, you should not be holding onto stressors that reside at work. Learn how to let go of these things, even if they are still pending. There is no benefit to holding onto this worry and anxiety, as it can be a burden to the time that you could be spending with your loved ones and friends. Learn how to accept these things for what they are, and if you do put thought into them while you are at home, only do this productively. Seek out solutions and answers instead of dwelling on what is currently wrong.

Other people love to work with those who have a great scheduling system. When you are placed in situations where you must rely on teamwork, it is important to pull your own weight. You never want to be a burden in a situation like this because other people will start to see you like this kind of person. Know your worth and what you are capable of. Show others that you know what you are doing and that you know what is going on around you at all times. This means that you should always be aware of deadlines and time constraints. You should always have a backup plan and additional resources to utilize.

Being able to show others how organized you are can take practice. It is easy to prove this to yourself because you know how your mind works and why you schedule your life the way that you do. When you need to show this to others, you need to really highlight the skills that you are exceptional at. Make people understand why you work as hard as you do. This is going to build your self-confidence in the process. Feeling good about yourself is a highly desired feeling and it is one that you should definitely experience! Allow yourself to feel pride in the things that you do and what you can accomplish.

Productivity

Accomplishing tasks is easier said than done, which is why you need to do much more than simply telling yourself that you are going to do these things. Productivity comes from productive habits, but that isn't a secret. Your habits form based on your current mindset and the internal and external environments that you surround yourself with. For example, if you are feeling lazy and you give yourself the option to stay at home and do nothing, you are going to be much more likely to choose this option than a productive one. Getting into a more focused mindset actually has a lot to do with your brain and the way that you think.

By using neuroscience, you can actually make yourself a more productive person. If you give your brain the option to not think about something, it is likely going to take it. People become so great at compartmentalizing their responsibilities by making excuses for themselves. Whether you blame your energy levels or the other tasks that you have to complete, excuses are excuses. The brain can be very quick-thinking when it wants a way out. For this reason, you need to work on *not* giving your brain the option to do this. While you are an individual with free will, this does not always mean that you are going to automatically choose to use your time in the best way possible.

Several things in life are designed to allow your brain to take a break. This can become both a blessing and a curse. Between automated services and apps that do things for you, this is further giving your brain the chance to make excuses for when you don't really feel like stepping up to the plate. Think about your free will as your chance to make better choices. In curbing your unhealthy and unmotivated habits, you will really need to take charge of your own reality. Think about the reasons *why* you must complete certain tasks. For example, if you do not do your laundry, you won't have any clothing to wear to work. Instead of dragging your feet and doing your laundry because you feel that you have no choice, reframe your thinking in order to remind yourself that you have a reason for doing this; you have an ultimate goal. Because you want to get your work week off to a great start, you are *choosing* to do your laundry.

Consider the neurotransmitters in your brain. Whether you are conscious of it or not, your brain is constantly releasing these neurotransmitters in order to tell you what you need to do next. Conforming to a lazy or unmotivated lifestyle is only going to further tell your brain that you do not need to take any action. Dopamine is the key to

having access to your most motivated behaviors. When you are lacking dopamine, you aren't going to feel that push to keep succeeding. Getting up and moving is a very simple step that you can take to increase your flow. You don't even need to dive into a full-blown workout to feel a difference. A simple brisk walk around your neighborhood will get that dopamine flowing and will activate your brain. Try to be as conscious as you can of your dopamine levels because this can become a make it or break it situation.

As much as your most active state of mind can help you with your productivity, getting enough rest for your brain is also important. If you are working hard on staying active, yet not giving your brain enough time to fully wind down, then you are going to be creating stress for yourself. When you get into these flows of productivity, utilize them to your advantage! Then, remember to give yourself a necessary period of rest. You can make sure that you are doing this by getting enough sleep and spending some time alone to rejuvenate yourself. Nowadays, it can become very easy to stimulate your brain without even realizing it. If you are watching TV or browsing social media, this is like giving your brain busy work. While it can feel relaxing, it is actually causing your brain to continue working. Cut down on your screen time.

Once you make sure that you are doing the best you can to shape your brain into the most productive version of itself, take a look at your surroundings. Is your home clean? Messy? Cluttered? You'd be surprised at what a messy or cluttered home can do to your brain and the way that you think. What does your desk look like at work? Do you have all the tools that you need? Make sure that your home environment and your work environment match up with the way that you'd like your brain to operate. While you might need to do a little bit of decluttering, this can make a big difference in the way that you feel overall.

Think about the way that you talk to yourself. Do you send yourself regular positive affirmations, or do you focus on the stressors and things that you haven't completed? You need to make sure that your inner voice is matching up with your desired positive outlook. Give yourself props for completing the tasks that you have already completed and use this as motivation to complete more. If you are being too hard on yourself, meditation can become a great form of stress relief. Explore different forms of meditation until you find one that aligns with you.

If you feel discouraged because you don't think you have enough positivity, yet you can't get as much done, know that this is a work in progress. You need to keep in mind all of the above factors and take a good look at how they operate in your daily life. Changes will probably be required, but you can think about these changes more as tools for you to utilize when you are working on yourself. Nothing is out of your reach, and you need to tell yourself this when you are feeling especially lacking. Know that a little push is all that it takes in order to create a big wave of change and improvement. Listen to your needs and give yourself the things that are going to allow you to access even more productivity than you already have. On the days when you are feeling productive already, do not settle. Always keep looking ahead and thinking of new ways that you can change your life for the better.

Progress

No matter what you are doing, keeping track of your progress will allow you to stay motivated. Not only is your progress essential for measuring your success, but it also serves as a daily reminder that you are making a difference in reaching your goals. Whether you plan on checking items off of your to-do list or actually doing a comparative analysis of your progress, it is important that it gets recognized. Many people tend to overwork themselves, only to end up feeling discouraged or tired from putting in so much effort. By learning how to stop and recognize how far you've come, this will be just the right push that you need in order to keep going.

When you are working on something small or tedious, it can be hard to measure your progress. Doing laundry, for example, is one task that can often seem never-ending. After each load that you do, pay attention to how your closet and drawers are filling back up with clothing. Remember how full the hamper was when you start it and compare it to how empty it gets along the way. This seems like a very simple thing to do for yourself, but it really can give you the extra push when you need it. Doing housework tends to be more tedious than doing a lot of other things, so the motivation is great to acknowledge.

At work, focus on your goals and try to do the same thing for yourself. Your boss might not always be there to give you praise, but there is

nothing wrong with giving it to yourself! Recognize that you are doing your best and making progress. Always look at tasks with a before and after approach, even if they take you days or weeks to fully complete. A lot of people tend to slack off or become disengaged when they are not constantly hearing praise from a superior. This change in habit suggests that you become your own support system. Tell yourself that you are doing a good job when you know that you are.

Social commitments can even be praised. While being social is an average part of the day for most people, it can be difficult for some. No matter where you fall on the spectrum, know that completing any social tasks is definitely a time for reflecting on your progress. Whether you are meeting your loved ones for fun or engaging in business meetings, it can take a lot out of you to mentally prepare for social interaction. Give yourself credit for being able to do this, no matter what else you have going on in your life. Social interaction might be a welcome task as compared to anything else that you have to do, but it can sometimes act as a burden. Give yourself credit for all that you are able to complete, no matter how small it might seem at the time.

Being too hard on yourself is the number one way to discourage yourself. If you ever feel that you aren't doing enough or that you are falling behind, you need to remind yourself of what you accomplish each day. Think about the little things that get you from point A to point B. While they might seem insignificant as standalone tasks, think about how they connect to other parts of your day. The commute to work might be necessary and you might do it begrudgingly, but give yourself credit for it! Without your commute, you would not be able to work and make money to feed yourself and your family. Try to get behind the real reasons why you are doing things and not just what you dislike about each task.

Everyone is bound to feel negative sometimes, but try not to let that be your resting daily mood. When you are so quick to point out what you hate or dislike about certain things, it will be all that you focus on. Even things that you are relatively good at can become a burden with negative thinking attached. Instead of hating the fact that you have to work on projects, turn inward to reframe your way of thinking. Focus on your strengths, and if you have any weaknesses, try to turn those into strengths. This is going to provide you with a chance to grow as a person. When you only focus on negativity, you become stuck in the current stage that you are in.

If you ever feel that you are becoming too negative, look for inspiration in others. Think about those who tirelessly commit to their lives because they are on the path toward a greater life. No matter how prepared you are for the things to come, life is always going to throw you for a loop from time to time. Praise yourself for rolling with the punches and still stepping up to the plate, even when you truly don't feel like it. These moments in which you push yourself to do more are all a part of your overall progress. They deserve to be acknowledged, along with all of the bigger moments that you tackle.

Reading literature about those you admire can serve as a quick boost of inspiration. Think about someone who has the characteristics that you desire for your own life. Whether this is someone you know in real life or a public figure, try to dive deeper into their methods. What do they do differently than you? Are there any new habits that you can try to focus on that will lead you toward better results? When you are less focused on your own life and your own problems, you will be able to see things from a new perspective. We all struggle with various things on a weekly basis, but these downfalls do not have to hinder our growth.

It does take practice to become the most motivated and productive version of yourself, but it all starts with awareness. If you can stop yourself each time the negativity or doubt begins to set in, you will save yourself from having to work twice as hard to get into a positive mindset. Acknowledge all of the small victories, as they always amount to something more when you are looking at the bigger picture. Tell yourself that you are doing great, even when you feel that your tasks are never going to end.

Wake up knowing that you *are* going to make progress, even if you do not finish everything on your list of tasks in one day. Some things take more time, but that should make you feel even more motivated to stay in your newfound positive headspace. Only you can control the way that you think. Instead of letting minor inconveniences cloud your mood and judgment, work on realizing that you can always rise above them. While your feelings are valid, do not spend too much time dwelling on these things. It can become unhealthy for your overall progress. If you need even more additional motivation, take a look at all that you have completed in a day, a month, and a year. A new perspective can be all it takes to get your mind back to where it needs to be.

Goals

While there has been a lot of talk about reaching your goals and staying focused, another important aspect to remember is that you need to keep a clear picture of which goals you are currently reaching for. You might have several different goals that you would like to accomplish at any given time, but it takes a sense of being able to prioritize in order to reach them all. Take a moment to reflect on what goals you have in your mind right now. Are you putting them in the correct order to get them done efficiently? You might feel that you have endless goals that you are reaching for, but if you do not make an effort to do them in the right order, you are going to feel that you are getting nowhere.

A great way to put this to the test is to look at your goals on a week-by-week basis. Consider what you aim to do each week, from work-related tasks to personal responsibilities that you must tend to. Write them all down and place a star next to each one that you consider most important. Being able to see everything in a tangible way will allow you to rethink your process. You might not feel that you need to change anything, but a shift in focus could make a big difference. Only having a certain amount of energy each day to dedicate to your goals means that you can very easily be spreading yourself too thin.

If you feel that your energy is being divided in too many ways, focus on your priorities. Divide your energy equally between them. Once you accomplish these goals, you can then turn to the smaller tasks once you finish the ones that have deadlines or strict timelines. Not being able to get tasks done on time is the number one way to stress yourself out. You might feel that you are drowning in tasks if you try to spread out your energy toward too many things. Treat your time and effort as valuable resources. Appreciate what you are capable of and how much motivation you put into things. You will be able to track your progress efficiently when you are completing your goals in full.

This is a very simple step to take that can create a big difference in your life. While it seems like you might be putting things on the back burner, know that you will come back to them when the time is right. Getting into the flow of things in this way will make you a more productive person overall. There are many different ways that you can categorize your goals, and it might seem overwhelming at first. Think

about the things you *need* to do. Tasks that are work-related usually take precedence. Since there are other people counting on you to finish your work, these things will naturally become a priority in your life.

If you happen to have goals that do not have deadlines, create them for yourself. Without adding too much additional stress to your life, having a set time in which you'd like to complete your tasks will make you a more productive person. Make sure that the goals you are setting for yourself are reasonable. If you set yourself up for failure, you are only going to get discouraged the more that you try to reach these goals. This does not mean that you need to lose sight of the things that are hard to accomplish. You must break them down in a way that makes sense given the time and skills that you are working with.

The hardest days to get things done are usually the days when you do not have to work. Relaxation is just as valuable as productive time. Learn how to balance the two equally. You do not have to spend all of your free time on unfinished tasks, but dedicating a little bit of time to these things can make your overall progress a lot more successful. Use your relaxation time as a reward for accomplishment. You can be pretty lax with your guideline, but having this reward system is just one of the many ways that you can stay motivated on days that are less demanding. Use your extra energy as a tool to work on something that you've been meaning to finish.

Knowing that you can still have both productivity and relaxation is a great feeling. Many people view this as a "one or the other" type of schedule, but it doesn't have to be. Listen to your mind and body when you are feeling burned out. Without a healthy mind and body, you are not going to be able to complete any tasks at all. Take care of yourself first, no matter what goals you are trying to accomplish. Pay attention to your happiness and fulfillment. Sometimes, endless relaxation and free time aren't going to be the answer to your problems. If you do too much of this, the guilt can start to creep in and cause you to feel that you aren't progressing as you should be. When you begin to think about this on a more conscious level, you will realize how to balance everything successfully.

If you are currently in a place where you feel lost or without enough guidance, take some time to meditate on what you would like to accomplish. Create a whole new set of goals for yourself. This new list can include goals that you are currently working on, but it can also include

some new ones that would bring you satisfaction to accomplish. Think about the things in your life that are most important and most valuable; you can build your list based on these things.

A new direction can be a breath of fresh air. It can be scary to think about changing the way that you operate your daily tasks, but a little bit of change can be motivating. Think about your success and how you wish to change your habits. This is meant to be a permanent change in lifestyle, so this means that you need to commit to it. Being able to commit to choices that you make is very healthy and will aid your personal growth. It takes self-confidence and a clear mind in order to make these decisions. The more that you do it, the easier it will become.

Focus

Secret agents need to practice laser focus in order to complete the tasks that are expected of them. Every moment of their time is scheduled in a way that allows them to complete tasks in a timely manner. While your life is not going to be exactly the same as that of a secret agent, comparing the way that they are able to focus can guide you on a path of better focus. Think about your tasks as essential steps during every single day, no matter if it is a weekday or a workday. If you imagined your tasks on the same level of importance as a secret agent would, how would you do things differently?

You might feel that you have all the focus you need, but if you are putting too much or too little of it into your tasks, then you aren't going to get the results that you expect. Being great at staying focused takes time management and prioritization, much like the other steps necessary for becoming a master of your own schedule. We all have difficulty focusing at times, and the reasons can vary greatly. Try not to hold too much weight on *why* you can't focus, but instead think about ways that you can regroup your thoughts.

When you try to complete tasks, is your environment supporting your end result? Having to handle tedious tasks in busy environments can be a challenge, especially when you can easily move to a new environment for the purpose of getting it done faster. For this same reason, make sure that your desk is always clean and ready for working. If you are trying to work in clutter, it can provide the same results as trying to work in an

environment that is too busy or noisy. These are very small details, but they matter a lot when you take a look at the bigger picture.

Multi-tasking can be another thing that is hindering your focus. While it can be necessary for certain tasks, it all comes down to knowing when you are and aren't spreading yourself thin. Instead of taking your focus and dividing it between multiple tasks, see if you can work with each task individually. While you won't always have this as a realistic option, you should aim to take it when you are able to. This keeps your brain focused on the task at hand rather than all of the tasks on your to-do list.

Know that you are also likely giving yourself distractions as a way out of doing work. Certain things like your phone and television—even your loved ones—can provide you with distractions that can feel welcome at the time. It is okay to tell someone no in order to stay focused. You must realize that you are doing this in order to free up your time later on. Once you are completely done with your focused energy, you can unwind and let it all go. If you function while flipping back and forth between the two at random, this can hinder your progress.

If you ever feel like you are losing focus while trying to complete your tasks, take a second to regroup. It won't get you entirely off track, but it will allow you just enough of a break in order to keep working toward your goals. When you reach that feeling of being overworked with a wandering mind, get out of the environment for a little while. Take a walk around the block and free up space in your mind. Use this time as a way for you to temporarily wind down while also ensuring that you can easily get back into a focused state of being.

Make sure that you are eating properly and getting enough sleep before you take on a day of focused tasks. When either one of these things is lacking, it will cause you to struggle with your progress. Understand that eating and sleeping are big components of living a healthy and productive lifestyle. Without either one of them, you would not be able to function properly. We tend to make ourselves the last priority because we feel that we can endure a lot at one time. While this might be true, know that you do not always have to endure bad things in order to achieve successful results.

Many of us become frustrated when we realize that we have lost focus. Know that this can happen to anyone, even secret agents. We are only human and we have other thoughts and ideas running through our heads at

all times. The important thing to learn is how to quiet these other things in order to make room for the things that we need to focus on in the present moment. If you do find that your mind wanders a lot, you might have to take some extra steps in order to ensure that your mind is ready to be focused. Take some time to meditate or write down your thoughts before you begin working on something. This will give you an outlet for your wandering thoughts and, if necessary, you can come back to them when you are done.

Instead of punishing yourself for not being able to stay focused, work on ways to reframe your thinking in order to get your mind back into a state of concentration. Do your best to enter any task that you have ahead of you with a clear mind. When you are finished working on the task, you can return to your thoughts that you had before. Often, you will actually find that you are able to let go of these things because they were only serving as background noise in the first place.

Chapter 3:

Week 2

As you enter your next week of creating new habits, you will find that your tasks are only going to get more interesting as you go. This week is full of many tips and tricks that will push you outside of your comfort zone. Think about this as an exciting time in your life rather than something that is scary or unwanted. If you are able to give these habits a chance, you are going to be a lot more versatile with the skills that you have. Many secret agents are placed in the field with no knowledge of what to expect until they get there. Think about your life along these terms. The only way that you can prepare yourself is by doing your best to make sure that you are a well-rounded person. The rest of the experience comes when you are actually participating in the tasks.

Enter this week with an open mind. Some of these tasks are going to be simple, yet effective ways to break through new barriers in your life. While they are relatively simple tasks, you can make sure that you are still learning something new by fully committing yourself to them. Allow yourself to become submerged in each new task that you are assigned. When you think about this as your duty, instead of merely a goal that you are trying to accomplish, you will find that you are able to dedicate yourself to the entire process a bit more. Use inspiration from the lives of secret agents in order to push yourself toward being more engaged.

Day 8: Playing Video Games

You get to kick this week off by playing games. It sounds too good to be true, but it is actually going to help you get into a better mindset. Video games are actually a great way to guide yourself toward making quick decisions. There is nothing worse than indecisiveness because it is one of the main things that will slow you down and allow doubt to creep in. Any time a secret agent hesitates, even for only a moment, they are leaving themselves vulnerable. This is something that these agents try very hard to avoid in order to remain as stealthy as possible. To apply the concept to your own life, think about the last time you were asked to make a decision. Did you come to your answer right away, or did it take a lot of time to think your options through?

There is nothing wrong with being careful, but if you exercise too much caution, you might be missing out on some very important opportunities. If you notice that your fears are holding you back, this usually means that you are holding onto them as a crutch. You need to let go of them in order to fully succeed and take the next step toward your goals. When you play video games, you are given choices in rapid succession. It is up to you to make your selections in order to get to the next phase in your mission.

Research has proven that those who play video games are better able to make real-life decisions as a result of it. The video games that were played during these studies were games that fit into the action category. These games usually involve some sort of shooter plotline and require concentration in order to complete the different phases of the game successfully. This is the type of game that you should aim to play during your day 8 task. Something that presents you with a lot of action is naturally going to give you many opportunities for decision-making.

Aside from being quick with the decisions, you will also notice that these games can help trigger your creativity. When you are placed in a high-pressure survival situation, you might need to think outside of the box to utilize your resources in the best way possible. Though this is all happening through a screen, being able to think this way is going to impact your real life too. It becomes so easy to lose sight of our creativity because of the burdens that stress places on our shoulders. Video games serve as a way to unwind and to return to our natural state of creative thinking.

Scientists have also found that those who play video games are better able to remember details about situations, conversations, and environments. This is usually a big component when it comes to playing action games, so it makes sense that you would also pick up on these skills. Being great at these things truly aligns with the progress you have already made during week 1. Being observant, as you know, is how secret agents succeed in their jobs. They must be on top of all the finest details in order to recall the information again at a later date.

A further study was done to directly measure the difference between gamers and non-gamers. Each person was given a series of decision-making experiments to navigate. Those who played at least 5 hours of video games per week were able to make all of their judgments about the experiments faster than those who did not play games. Gamers were also seen as better able to identify certain auditory sounds that were presented through headphones. It took non-gamers a lot longer to process and identify these sounds.

With this task for day 8, moderation is important. I'm not saying that you should drop all of your responsibilities in order to play video games for hours at a time. Using your best judgment, pick some free time that you'd like to dedicate to playing games. You can use this as a chance to unwind and unravel your focus. Without putting a strain on yourself, allow yourself to play a game of your choosing that centers on fast-paced action. It might be hard to tear yourself away from the screen once you truly get into it. Try not to think about any stressors or tasks that you must do; only put your focus on your tasks in the game.

It is thought that you can actually become smarter with the help of video games. Though it is a game that you can utilize for fun, it actually trains you in a way that is very similar to the skills that you need in order to make real-life decisions. It wouldn't be responsible to say that video games will definitely improve your life, but you can gather some of the best skills and qualities that you get from playing them and apply them to your life. Being a gamer teaches you how to become better at dealing with things that are unpredictable. Life isn't always going to go as planned, and this can be said for special agents and civilians alike. When you are able to let go of this control, you are going to be better able to handle anything that comes your way.

Special agents who are hired to protect the public are often video gamers. Their skills are proven to work during real missions along with missions that are created by the games for fun. This says a lot about what a little bit of video game time can do for your own life. When you open your mind to something that is new, you never know what kind of results you will be able to see. Even if you already play games on a regular basis, get a new one for the purpose of this day 8 task. Try to pick one that will set your focus in the right direction and allow you to practice with your critical thinking skills.

Day 9: Challenging Social Barriers

Your social skills are valuable and practical skills to have. Whether you enjoy social interaction or you find yourself resistant to it, challenging the way that you interact with others is how you are going to spend day 9. Talking to other people is definitely a skill, and not everyone feels that they are naturally equipped with it. In order to talk to someone, you need to find some common ground in order to introduce a topic that will get a response. While you can be more general with your approach, you still need to have a certain level of confidence in order to make a statement to someone or to ask them a question. By letting go of your expectations, you should be able to talk to other people without worrying about what they think of you or how they will react.

Try to challenge yourself on this day. Aim to talk to 5 strangers that you encounter. While you don't have to stop and have full conversations with each of them, you never know what can happen. Be open to these conversations and see where they go naturally. Your job is to think about what you can say to each of these 5 people whom you decide to talk to. Starting with a compliment or something nice is one way that you can find common ground. If they aren't very receptive to your conversation, don't take this personally! You don't know what any given person is going through each day, especially not when it comes to strangers. Accept their answer for what it is and feel good that you decided to say something kind to them.

This task might surprise you because it can lead you to realize that different things can happen to you during the day when you open yourself up. If you start each day with closed-off energy, you are keeping a lot of things bottled up inside. By being less willing to talk to other people, you will find that other people are going to receive the same message and be less willing to talk to you in return. This can become a bad feeling when you realize that others are being pushed away by your attitude. Try to remember that there is nothing wrong with giving others a chance. While you don't need to share your entire life with strangers that you encounter, see how it can serve you when you aim to be a little bit more open.

Special agents must be able to socialize and network. When they are working at gathering information, this personable aspect is what takes them to the next level. They need to get to know others while also forming

connections and bonds that can be useful for later on in their missions. Special agents do not stop at socialization. They have ways that they can actually gauge certain levels of friendliness in order to see if they suspect a person is a trustworthy source or not. For fun, you can attempt to do the same thing. Your perceptions of other people actually say a lot about yourself.

When you are in a group setting, whether you know the people around you or if they are all strangers, try your best to “interrogate” each person. This does not mean you need to approach everyone with harsh questions that will lead to awkward socializing. Do your best to feel out each conversation and see if you can gather what each person’s intention is just by the questions that you ask. In order to do this, you might have to be less blunt or direct than you would expect. Ask people questions that will naturally allow them to reveal their personalities without you having to do too much digging. You can ask people how they feel about certain topics and why. Try to ask questions that revolve around personal values and morals.

You can also do this to your friends and loved ones whom you already know fairly well. When you ask these specific questions, try to make them as natural as possible. Show them that you care about what their response is in a genuinely curious way. If you force questions too strongly, you will alert them that you might have alternate intentions. When you are very upfront about where you stand, this pushes others to do the same. This is what is known as “mirroring,” and it is a big part of nearly any social interaction that you will have. Your energy is going to be mirrored, just as your speech pattern will be. If you are rushed when you start a conversation with someone, they are likely going to make it quick, for example.

The more that you practice with meeting new people and making friends, the more that you will naturally begin to integrate your best social skills into your daily life. This part can take practice to learn, but you will never know unless you find out for yourself. Try different conversation starters and seek out different places to meet others. Do your best to make sure that your energy is always open to interacting with people. Sometimes, when you least expect it, you will form a connection that can shape you for the rest of your life.

Since it is thought that the people you spend the most time with are going to make an impact on the way that you live your life, be cautious of who you are giving your time to. Treat your time as a precious resource that should not be wasted on bad energy or negativity. You will know right away if someone isn't a good fit for your life based on the way that they make you feel over time. Listen to these red flags in order to protect yourself. Know that it is okay to say no to others. Saying no is a big part of becoming great at socializing. While it is nice to have an agreeable friend, it is a lot nicer to have an honest one whom you can trust.

Day 10: Learning About Plants

On this day, you are going to learn about plant medicine. This is another way that you can train your brain in order to identify certain plants, as well as teaching it some practical information that could come in handy when you least expect it. Plants are a lot more than a landscaping addition or a decoration to have in your home. When special agents are out in remote locations, they rely on their knowledge about plants in order to create life-saving medicines and practical remedies. Because it is a subject that most people are unfamiliar with, you will likely be able to learn a lot of new information by completing this task. Each time that you go outside, try to identify what plants are around you. When you can become familiar with the plants in your local area, you will then be able to research exactly what each one is capable of.

The following is a common list of plants that you might already encounter daily. Each one is useful for a purpose that goes far beyond the aesthetic appeal. Take a look at this list and see if you notice any of these plants throughout your day:

- **Chamomile:** Most familiar with it in tea form, you already likely know that chamomile is a calming herb that can be used to relax you. It can actually be used as a mild sedative when you are out in the wild. If you are experiencing inflammation, it can also be applied in a warm compress to calm the swelling in your skin. Take caution if you decide to use chamomile for healing because it has been known to make people feel drowsy.
- **Echinacea:** This is a plant that is commonly used to treat colds and infections. If you are suffering from any pain as a result of a wound, echinacea can also be very useful. While it might not kill your virus as well as a standard antibiotic, echinacea has worked for shortening the course of the common cold and flu viruses. Be cautioned that echinacea is part of the daisy family, so any allergic reactions to these plants will likely apply if you use it.
- **Garlic:** An unexpected medicine, garlic has a wide range of health benefits. It can be used to lower your blood pressure and your cholesterol. Some researchers have even discovered that garlic can be a viable method in preventing cancer. Naturally, most people are not able to consume a lot of garlic at once because it

has a very strong flavor. When you add it to your meals sparingly, though, you will be able to receive its benefits.

- **Ginger:** This is a root-based plant that has been known for playing a large role in healing over the last several centuries. It is great at easing nausea and preventing motion sickness. People who start to feel sick or dizzy can often drink ginger-based beverages and feel instant relief. If your stomach is unsettled, it can also aid in allowing your digestive system time to catch up. This is another strong flavor, so it should be used sparingly. When they use it correctly, people have reported very successful and instantaneous results.
- **Ginkgo:** This is a leaf that you can use for medicinal purposes. It is known as something that can cure respiratory ailments such as asthma and bronchitis. Also, it can be used to improve your memory and to prevent dementia. Although it isn't certain exactly how ginkgo works with your body, studies have shown that people experienced an improvement when taking it on a regular basis. Only use the leaves of the ginkgo plant when you plan on using it medicinally. The seeds actually contain toxins that can cause seizures if you are not careful.
- **Milk Thistle:** This is classified as a fruit and it contains healing properties for your liver. It has also been known to slow the growth of cancerous cells. This is a plant that first originated in the Mediterranean region, being used there for years as a healing plant. While studies are not certain that milk thistle is the answer for all liver problems, it has still been shown to help those who are suffering. Nowadays, it is fairly common to find milk thistle outdoors in many different areas around the country. Becoming familiar with it can allow you a very helpful resource.
- **Valerian:** This is a root that helps you sleep. It has also been known to help with anxiety. Most commonly, it is used as a way to flavor certain types of beer and other foods. Much like any other plant medicine, it should be used sparingly until you know exactly how your body is going to react to it. If your body reacts well, then you now have a great resource for curing your sleeplessness when you just can't get your brain to shut off.

Whether you have heard of all these plant medicines before or you are just becoming familiar with them for the first time, it is impressive to think that they all contain such diverse healing properties. Plants that you likely see every single day in passing can actually be used as medicine if you know how to identify them correctly. This is something that anyone can learn if they are willing to invest the time on research. By doing this task, you will be encouraged to think critically and productively. Try to look around you and see certain items as resources rather than background noise.

When secret agents are out in the field, they aren't necessarily going to have access to a pharmacy with endless antidotes. With some advance preparation and thinking quickly in the moment, these agents can create their own medicines. Using the natural healing properties that each plant contains, secret agents are well-versed in this type of skill in case they need to quickly come up with a solution for a problem. Not only can this plant medicine be used for agents to heal themselves, but they can also use it to heal others whom they are responsible for keeping safe.

Day 11: Keeping Up With Current Events

Being aware of what is going on around you is important. This does not only mean that you need to pay attention to details, but you also need to keep up with current events that are going on throughout the world. When you have a grasp on what is going on, you will better be able to understand the attitudes of others around you. The events that take place around us have the ability to shape us, even if we do not agree with them. For example, when there is a war or a threat of war, people are more likely to feel on edge about life. This possibility usually makes us fearful and hesitant in the ways that we navigate through our lives.

Alternatively, when things are going well in the world, this makes people more trusting with their actions. If the mood is ultimately one that is happy, then people are going to feel more at ease with how they portray themselves. These social findings are very interesting to research. Not only will you get to know others and their motives better this way, but you will also probably understand yourself better, as you are not exempt from these feelings. Just as big world events can shape the way that people think, they can just as easily shape your way of thinking.

The trick to keeping up with current events is being able to read the paper without being swayed in one direction or the other. Read the information for what it is before you decide to have an opinion about it. We tend to hear information and quickly jump to conclusions based on the way that it influences our emotions. When you can read the news from a viewpoint that isn't biased, you will likely get more out of it. This can be very difficult, as we are all passionate about certain things. You don't need to get rid of your passion altogether, just simply set it aside for a moment.

Secret agents must always be on top of the latest news. They are constantly working to gather this information and need to keep their minds open when they attempt to decipher it. When a secret agent is receiving any information, they are automatically sorting it into categories. Normally, they will either keep the information for later, as it is relevant. Alternatively, they will let go of the information because it is irrelevant. Getting the hang of categorizing this information comes with practice. Don't expect yourself to know exactly how to do it until you have more experience with this selection process.

Once you read the news, gather the relevant bits of information. When news is reported, there tends to be a lot of filler involved. Remember that journalism tends to prey on those who are impacted by emotions. Reporters will write a story and utilize details that aim to pull on your heartstrings in order to get you to feel a certain way. It is unfortunate, but it is true if you think about it. This is why being able to think for yourself is so important. See how you really feel about something by gauging your very first reaction to it.

When you determine how you feel about the news, ask yourself why you feel this way. Do your personal beliefs come into play? Do you have a passion for one of the topics? By questioning yourself, you will get to know yourself better. You will also be able to pick out any biased thinking that is happening. Biased thinking is a common occurrence and it is not always your fault. When you are conditioned to think this way, it becomes hard to break the habit. As you know, it is possible to change this behavior, though.

Once you are able to identify which information is relevant, you might be wondering what you need to do with it. This part tends to cause confusion, but you don't have to do anything with the information except for making note of it. Remember it for later and see if you can make any connections in the future. Just because the information is relevant does not necessarily mean that you need to take action right away. If you feel compelled to take action, ask yourself why. From there, you can research real ways to help the cause and make a difference. This will allow you to think in a more mindful way.

Secret agents will sit on certain information for a very long time without having to use it. They are able to pick out all of the details on each topic when asked, though. This is how you should be modeling your behavior. Remain keen and observant, but don't tell everyone everything that you know unless it becomes necessary. Having a bit of mystery behind your persona makes you an interesting person. People will feel curious and intrigued to be able to take a look into the way that you think. Use this to your advantage.

Once reading the paper becomes habitual, you can start to broaden your research. Try to read about events that are happening all over the world and not just in your own backyard. Having a complete world view is going to make you a more well-rounded person. When you can educate

yourself on the way that people who are very different from you think, then you are going to be able to understand them more effectively. This promotes tolerance and acceptance for those who are different than you. Having this kind of tolerance is very important because a lot of horrible world issues happen due to people not seeing eye to eye. Instead of being respected for their differences, people tend to spew hatred instead. Become a role model by treating others the way you wish to be treated. Get rid of any intolerance before it becomes a problem.

Day 12: Learning Humor

Humor is a very important tool in life. Not only can it get you through tough times, but it can also bridge gaps between people. No matter what language you speak, humor always seems to be universal. What is fascinating is that everyone has a different sense of humor. Some people are comfortable with joking around in their daily lives, while others have a harder time accepting it. This task involves you becoming more open about your sense of humor, no matter how open you currently are. By doing so, you can create stronger bonds with others and appear to be a more trustworthy person.

Your sense of humor is one of the many things that make you appear interesting to others. If you are unwilling to joke around, then you are often perceived as uptight. On the other hand, if you cannot be serious, then you will likely be labeled as someone who cannot be trusted. While you might not choose to label yourself, others are regularly assigning you labels because it is human nature. If you want to be the most likable person that you can be, then consider how much you allow your sense of humor to shine through.

No matter how comfortable you are with your sense of humor, it always helps to seek out inspiration from others. Watch a comedy special and see what you enjoy about it. Do you enjoy the way the comedian delivers the jokes? Do you enjoy the topics that were brought up? Finding your unique style of humor is a process that can mean observing other types of humor before settling on your own. There is nothing wrong with laughter, as long as you are not directly hurting anyone in the process. Letting yourself laugh is very healthy, and this is why being able to make others laugh is such a desirable quality. Whether someone is looking for a friend or a partner, a good sense of humor is typically on the list of requirements.

When you are able to joke around with people, this usually means you will be able to get out of tense situations. It can be a big risk to tell a joke during a time when both people do not feel like laughing, but it can truly pay off. If you work on your timing, you can likely make anyone laugh. Even if the situation isn't tense between the two of you, humor can still be used to lighten up the mood. Humor is much more than just joking around; it can be a great social tool to utilize. The great thing is, it is easy to see if

your sense of humor is working on other people—they will be laughing if it's working!

Try not to put too much pressure on yourself as you aim to make your sense of humor better. If you aren't making people laugh at first, you might just be missing the mark. Instead of changing your entire sense of humor, make smaller changes to experiment. This can sort of become a game as you try to figure out just how to amuse people. You can start by changing the topics that you joke about to see how others react. Try to think about the things that are truly funny to you and then you can attempt to express them to others.

If this doesn't work, you might just need to work on your comedic timing. Telling a joke with an immediate punchline doesn't leave much room for curiosity. When you let the other person wait in anticipation for a moment, this builds up your potential for making them laugh. When you don't allow people to laugh right away, they are going to want to laugh even more. This sort of give or take will make you seem even funnier without you having to change your topics. There are plenty of different videos that you can watch and resources that you can use to practice your joke-telling ability. Look into these things for fun.

When things are difficult in life, humor tends to make them easier, if only for a moment. Many people lean on humor as a coping mechanism and this can be a healthy substitute for other coping mechanisms that are more self-destructive. Learn how humor can not only be something that is amusing, but also something that can give you hope. When someone is going through a hard time, knowing that there are still comical moments in life can keep them feeling calm and stable. Not everyone responds the same way to humor, but it is definitely a skill that is worth accomplishing. Also, it will make you feel better at the same time.

Buy a joke book and try to learn different styles of jokes. The more that you work with humor and building your own personal sense of humor, the better your comedic timing will become. Many people take life too seriously, and while there are definitely moments where it is more appropriate to be serious, there will also be moments where a lighthearted attitude is much appreciated. This is a very likable personality trait, one that allows people to feel that they can trust you or count on you. In working on your habits, you should be aiming to become a better person overall. Believe it or not, a little humor can go a long way.

The next time that you are going through something difficult, try to turn to the jokes and humor that you have learned. Realize that the moment might be hard, but it isn't going to stay hard forever. Any frustrations are temporary and how you handle them will ultimately decide how your mood is going to impact you in the moments to come. Learning how to let go of things that are only going to tear you down can help you realize that there are going to be better things waiting for you just around the corner.

Day 13: Leaving Addictions Behind

Vices are a part of everyday life. We all have them and their level of severity can vary. Whether you are dependent on coffee or you decide to smoke when you are stressed out, either of these things can form an addictive habit in your life. In order to complete this task, you need to be willing to give up the things that can possibly hinder you, even if you do not believe that they are holding you back. Start by having a dry month. This means not drinking alcohol. Even if you do not drink very much, completely cutting alcohol out of your life for this time can allow you to think clearer. When something is notorious for altering your consciousness, you might not realize how much it is impacting you until you are no longer accepting it in your life.

Pay attention to how you feel when you are lacking alcohol. You will probably realize that your thoughts and feelings are more intense. Accept the things that you are experiencing. Think about how much healthier you are without this alcohol in your life. Your body isn't going to be in a state of hangover and won't experience any clumsiness or compromised motor skills. Learn how to appreciate being fully in control of what you are saying and doing. Drinking has become a social rite of passage, but you should know that you can still have fun and unwind without it.

Even if you don't consider yourself to have an addictive personality, getting into the habit of drinking alcohol can become a setback. When you are under the influence, you aren't in full control of your life. This can be a much-needed escape for some, but it can quickly become dangerous if you aren't careful. Going dry will allow you to truly become aware of what you are doing and what your goals are. It can be a chance for you to regroup and focus on what you truly need to be doing. Drinking isn't the only way that you can find a break in the daily stressors that you can encounter.

If smoking is your vice, make this your month to quit. Whether you need to go cold turkey or wean yourself off of them, make it a point to decide on quitting. There is never going to be a "best" time to quit, so you need to make the decision to do it. Use this day as a big source of motivation. When you quit smoking, you are going to experience some withdrawal symptoms, but if you prepare yourself for them, you should be able to work through them and find other ways to keep yourself settled.

Try to focus on meditation or writing each time that you feel like you need to have a smoke. You can find better, healthier options for yourself.

When secret agents are recruited, it is part of the procedure for their supervisors to look into their vices. When someone is inhibited by any vice, this places them in a position of weakness. Being able to remain clear-headed and calm on your own is something that these agencies are going to prefer over those who are dependent on substances. Plus, substances impact your memory. As you know, having a sharp mind and keen memory is a very important part of being a secret agent and a functional being in general. When you are aware of your surroundings, you are going to have a better grasp of what you need to be doing. Having vices sort of shuts these sensors off, which can ultimately begin to hinder you.

If you are wary of giving up your vices for good, think about this as a test for yourself. Prove to yourself that you can give them up, even if it is only for the remainder of the month. You can still feel great in knowing that you have made this progress. Periodically, you can test yourself in this way by challenging yourself to see how long you can last without them. Remember, anything can become a vice if you rely on it enough. Drinking and smoking aren't the only things that keep people inhibited. By taking a closer look at your habits, you might realize that staying up too late is your vice. Maybe you watch too much TV. Be honest with yourself about your behaviors.

Whenever you need that extra motivation, think about how much healthier your mind and body are without these vices in your life. Think about all of the things that you are now able to do with your clear head and redefined focus. Nobody can make the decision to give up these vices except for you, so this automatically holds you accountable for all of the choices that you will make. This can be a scary realization of responsibility, but it is necessary to hold yourself personally accountable for these things. You will feel proud of yourself when you realize that you can get through life without addictions.

In giving up certain vices, a lot of people come to the realization about just how dependent they are on them. This can be unsettling when you truly think about it. The great news is that you are willing and able to make changes. By changing your habits to ones that are more positive and fulfilling, you are growing as a person. Don't allow yourself to get stuck in

the mindset of thinking that you are trapped. If you truly feel that you cannot get through this alone, seek out support. Talking about your vices with people that you trust can be very helpful. You can also opt for professional support, if necessary. No matter what it takes, know that you have the strength to accomplish it successfully.

Chapter 4:

Reflections on Week 2

At this point, you have successfully reached another milestone in your efforts. You are more than halfway through your transformation and growth. Take a moment to reflect on how you feel now compared to how you felt when you first started making these changes. You have likely learned a lot of new skills, as well as learned a lot about who you are and what you want out of life. Try not to hold judgment over these thoughts and allow them to come to your mind naturally. Next, think about what you want to do in your third week. You should have learned some valuable lessons on trial and error so far. Use them to guide you toward even more success for your next round of new tasks.

The great part about working on yourself is that all of the progress you are making is for you. Since you aren't doing this to please other people or prove yourself to other people, you can take pride in knowing that you are doing this to better your own life. In turn, this does make you a better person to those you interact with as well. You should notice an increase in confidence and your ability to accomplish tasks. The habit of doing something new each day is one that is going to stick with you. Even once you are finished with this guide, you should be able to think about more things that you can learn and more activities that you would like to accomplish on your own.

Gather inspiration from the way that secret agents keep themselves motivated. Even when they are not on missions, they are constantly thinking of ways to become better. You have probably realized that their mindset is a great mindset to maintain, even if you do not plan on entering a battlefield or gathering intel to try and influence world affairs. The mindset that secret agents keep is one that is alert and aware. They are constantly working on new skills and learning new things, seeking any opportunity to gain a further advantage, no matter how small. This is the best way to avoid becoming stagnant or too used to your routines. Sometimes, getting far outside of your comfort zone is the best way to figure out where your comforts truly lie.

Day 14: Goal-Setting

Now that you've had practice with setting short-term goals, you are going to take it to the next level. Your task on this day is to think about your future. A lot of people are uncomfortable with this thought because it contains unknown information. Try to see this as a positive aspect. Know that you might not be able to control exactly what happens in your future, but if you put enough positive intent behind it, then you can accomplish some extraordinary things. Think about the things that you want for yourself on a long-term level. What is something that you have always wanted to accomplish but haven't yet because it is going to take some time?

You can use the habits that you have learned so far to shape your future desires. Maybe in learning some of these new skills, you have realized some things that are lacking in your life. Perhaps you want to continue to branch out and experience things that are new and unknown. Curiosity is a great motivator when you are thinking about what your long-term goals should be. Allow yourself to explore these different avenues of life that you were once convinced you never could. Approaching anything as possible is going to allow you to feel confident, no matter what you are doing. The only person stopping you from making this progress is yourself.

Long-term goals differ from short-term goals because you need to have patience in order to reach them. Sometimes, you might not accomplish your long-term goals for months or even years, but they should still be on your mind, no matter what you are doing. What you must remember is that your smallest actions will work a long way toward your goals. Every little bit of effort counts for something. Many people become discouraged because they aren't seeing instant progress. This is when you need to step up and remind yourself of what you have done so far. Compare your before and after results frequently in order to keep yourself motivated.

Staying Motivated

You aren't always going to have a lot going on in your life, so having something that you can focus on that is set for the future can give you some guidance. Whenever you feel that you are starting to stray from your path, you should be able to get yourself refocused. Know that

procrastination only leads to wasted energy. If you have prepared yourself to accomplish something, make sure that you see it through. Otherwise, you are teaching yourself a habit of only halfway meeting your goals. Following through is the easiest way to teach yourself healthy habits regarding goal-setting. Even when you feel tired or unable to follow through, push yourself to focus enough so that you can. You will feel thankful that you did.

Think about the way that a special agent might be required to start a fire with a magnifying glass. This takes precision and accuracy to ensure that they are using the sunlight to the best of their ability. If they aren't focused and they keep moving the magnifying glass around, this energy becomes wasted and the initial goal of starting a fire will fail. You can think about your goals in this same way. If you are devoting any kind of energy to accomplishing them and setting them, you need to make sure that the energy is focused. Flipping back and forth between several different thoughts is like moving your magnifying glass around too much. With a steady hand comes steady results.

A lot of people have difficulty with this task because they do not see a target immediately in front of them. If possible, you need to create one for yourself. Try to make the target something tangible and reasonable. When you can set your focus on something that seems more attainable, you are more likely to be able to concentrate as you do it. This all comes from knowing how to successfully reframe your way of thinking. You might be stuck in habits that stem all the way back to your childhood, but this doesn't mean you just need to accept them and live this way. You can always make changes, as long as you are willing to put in the effort.

If you need some inspiration, take a look at what other successful people are doing. What would a secret agent do if they were in your position? You likely hadn't thought about comparing your life to that of a secret agent, but it can give you a nice perspective. Stealth and laser focus are two things that are needed in abundance, and it doesn't hurt for civilians to aim for the same skills in their everyday lives. Think about your life as though it is a mission. What is your end result going to be? What can you do to accomplish it successfully? These are the questions that will get you into the right mindset.

Measuring Progress

If you set goals for yourself, you will also be setting up a way for you to measure your progress. Your goals are going to be milestones along the way and each time that you reach one, there is a potential for you to compare your progress to what it was before. There is nothing wrong with checking your progress frequently. As long as it is motivating you to keep going and to keep doing better, you should be able to measure it as often as you like. Be aware that focusing too much on the progress can hinder you if you become obsessive about it. There must always be a balance between comparing and contrasting. Don't punish yourself if you feel that you aren't progressing quickly enough. Remember, different goals are going to take different lengths of time to complete.

You should measure the success of your long-term goals in the most realistic way possible. If you try to measure your progress as you would short-term goals, you might make yourself feel disappointed for no reason. Your long-term goals could take so long that you might not see any progress for weeks or even months. Try to keep this timeline in mind when you do try to measure anything. If nothing appears to be different or better, take a look at what you are doing in order to work toward the goal. If you are working on it on a daily basis, then you can rest assured that you are doing everything that it takes in order to accomplish it.

For your long-term success, keep a way to measure your goals handy but in a way that you aren't relying on it as your only source of motivation. You need to seek out different ways to keep motivated, but knowing that you are going to see some progress can be a treat once you have been working at your goal for a little while. Only by doing will you be able to create the perfect balance in tracking and measuring your progress. If you become so invested in your goals, you might actually forget to measure your progress for some time. This can be a great reminder when you encounter hardship and you are able to see some real results that are supporting your cause.

Having the ability to measure your progress will also solidify the point that your goals are going to come to an end eventually. It can be really hard to stay patient as you work on something that has a long-term completion date. Sometimes, you might not even know exactly how long it is going to take. For example, you might want to build a house for your family but you likely aren't going to be able to pick a day for certain when it will be possible. The thought of accomplishing something like this

should be enough to keep you motivated, though. From the first time you call an architect to the first bit of money that you put into your savings account, these are all benchmarks that can be used to measure your progress in the future. By knowing that these resources are eventually going to be used, you will be reminded that your goals are going to reach a point of completion.

Remaining Undistracted

No matter what kind of long-term goals you are currently set on, you have likely experienced your fair share of distractions. They come in all shapes and sizes, always handy for when you waiver in your concentration. It takes a lot of willpower to say no to distractions and to remain focused on your goals, even when you do not know exactly when you are going to complete them. There are countless distractions that special agents encounter when they are out in the field, but they must work hard to sort through them as they focus on what is truly important. The influence of others can become a huge distraction that can impact your success. If other people do not understand your long-term plans, they are likely going to form opinions about them that might challenge your own beliefs.

Know that this can happen, but it shouldn't be enough to hinder the things that you truly want. You don't owe anyone an explanation when it comes to your own personal long-term goals. They are your goals for a reason, as they should mainly be impacting your life. If someone appears to be genuinely curious about what it is that you are doing, confidently explain it to them and reaffirm why you feel as confident as you do. By saying this out loud, you will also reinforce the feeling for yourself. Sometimes, it takes a little bit of courage or bravery to be able to stand up in front of someone and explain such an elaborate plan. This can be very good for you if you do it frequently. Trust that you are confident enough to explain yourself without compromising your beliefs and your process.

When you can keep yourself undistracted, the little things that pop up along the way won't feel as tempting. For example, if you were trying to save up for a vacation to Europe, you are going to be less likely to take smaller road trips throughout the year because this is money that can be used to fund your big trip. While you are going to miss out on these smaller trips, the end result of being able to experience the bigger vacation

should put things into perspective for you. Instead of seeing it as a sacrifice that you are making, you will be able to see it as an extra effort that you are putting into the cause. In a society that praises instant gratification, it can be hard to remember that these things that appear to be sacrifices are actually not what they seem. By staying undistracted, you are actually going to be able to reach your big goals quicker.

Be aware that taking breaks means that you are pausing your progress. Think about how you can keep going while giving yourself the time to rest without losing momentum. Some days you might have to put in a little bit less effort because you might only have a little bit of energy to spare—that is okay! As long as you are still putting effort toward the cause, then you are still going to be making progress. When you take a “break” from your long-term goals, this is as though you are giving yourself permission to get rid of all the healthy habits that you have learned. Just as easily as you learned them, they can also be unlearned. If you don’t let yourself get to this point completely, you should still be able to take it easy without disrupting any of your patterns.

Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastination is a huge barrier that everyone must face. It is the desire to do less when you really need to be doing more. Whether you are working or trying to complete chores around the house, you have been faced with the dilemma on numerous occasions as to whether or not you should procrastinate or keep pushing forward. Because long-term goals give you the illusion that you have a lot more time to complete them, this can often lead to procrastination habits. Because the end result is in the future, you might be less keen on working on these goals daily. Keep in mind that any effort that you put toward your long-term goals will allow you to complete them faster. If you are constantly procrastinating, then you aren’t going to see results for a very long time.

A very hard habit to break, procrastination comes naturally to a lot of us. It is a way for us to take our minds off of the things that we tell ourselves we need breaks from. While listening to your mind and body is very important, you shouldn’t go too easy on yourself. Think about the ways that a secret agent would operate if they were in your shoes. They would find an energy reserve and use that to push through the feeling of

laziness. If you are able to give yourself a little push, you will find that you can normally get past the feeling of wanting to procrastinate. Once you slip up, though, then it can be hard to not procrastinate. The feeling is infectious and it can be a very welcoming feeling when you have been working at something for such a long time.

You can give yourself freedom in the way that you work that won't ultimately lead to procrastination. Allow yourself the time and space to clear your head when necessary, but try to not stray too far from the goal in mind. You can also do things that allow your brain to focus on something else while still ensuring that you are being productive. If you are trying to clean out an entire room, you can give your brain a break from this task by focusing on something like running errands outside of the house. A simple change in the environment can do a lot for your brain. When you give yourself breaks like this, you are still going to be in a productive mindset when you return to your original task.

The more that you stand up against procrastination, the less you will find that your mind craves it. When it is something that you seldom or never give into, you won't find yourself missing it. Procrastination can often feel like a whirlwind because it sweeps you up in a series of bad or unhealthy habits. The more that you give in, the more that it is possible for it to take over. When you take away this control, you are taking your life back into your own hands. It feels great to know that you are driven on your own terms to complete your goals without having to rely on procrastination to get you through. Once you do reach your end result, you will also feel a lot more accomplished in knowing that you got to this point seamlessly.

The following are some tips that can be utilized if you often find yourself relying on procrastination:

- Think About the Things You Plan on Doing "Tomorrow:" You might have a perfectly valid reason why you need to accomplish certain tasks tomorrow instead of right now. Time is often a reason why you might need to put these tasks off. In order to make sure that you aren't just procrastinating, try to think about your "tomorrow" tasks before the end of each day. Determine which ones you truly need to wait to accomplish and which ones you have simply allocated to tomorrow's roster. For the latter, try your best to get them done right away. While it might give you some

extra work to accomplish before you can rest for the day, you will wake the next day knowing that you will have one less thing to do. This can significantly help improve your desire to procrastinate.

- **Pick a Time to Focus on Your To-Do List:** Having a to-do list shows that you are organized and ready to tackle your responsibilities. The effort cannot stop there, though. When you are working with your to-do list, make sure that you are dedicating some time each day to truly reading it over and determining what should be done next. Since you made your to-do list, you are going to be most familiar with it. Hold yourself accountable for the things that you told yourself you would do. There is nothing more disappointing than failing to complete reasonable goals that you have set for yourself.
- **Get Rid of Your Perfectionist Complex:** Nobody is perfect! Say it over and over again until you truly start to believe it. No matter how focused and organized you are, this does not mean that you are going to be able to complete all of your goals flawlessly without experiencing any setbacks. This is just not realistic and it is unhealthy to keep living by these expectations. It will drive you crazy and make you feel like you aren't making any real progress. We are our own worst critics; that is no secret. There comes a point when you have to realize that this constructive criticism actually might not be as beneficial as you once thought. Instead of judging your actions and comparing them to your idea of perfection, appreciate what you are actually doing and feel proud of yourself.
- **Talk to Other People:** Social anxiety can hinder us when it comes to completing tasks. If you ever feel that you can accomplish something, but the thought of having to interact with others pushes you to procrastinate, you are not alone. You might consider yourself a people person, but there are times when everyone can tend to feel a little bit more withdrawn. Having to rely on people to complete your goals can be hard, but it is a necessary part of your own personal growth. If you have any tasks that you are putting off because you feel that you just don't want to socialize, try to push past the feeling. The sooner you get it over with, the sooner you can forget about it. Plus, if you keep others waiting,

this is going to put unnecessary pressure on yourself. The other person might reach out to you and wonder why you haven't had a discussion with them yet. In order to keep the mood as neutral as possible, try to get to these tasks before they become demanding of you.

- **Focus on Your Direction:** When you feel tempted by procrastination, consider what giving in is going to do with the direction of your success. Is this action going to take you further away from your end goal? Almost always, the answer is going to be yes. Procrastination is not designed to get you any closer to completing your goals. It is simply a coping mechanism that can be used to take your mind off of things when you feel too lazy or overwhelmed to do them. If you think about it, procrastination is only going to add additional steps to your process. Instead of simply doing the task at hand, you are going to have to do make-up work in order to get to the same place. It might not seem like an inconvenience right away, but these things add up. You might be creating a lot of unnecessary work for yourself by procrastinating.
- **Think About Your Biggest Inconvenience:** When you are trying to decide if you are going to turn to procrastination or not, you likely dive into a compare and contrast narrative. Most people will rationalize their decision to procrastinate by reaffirming that things will still be fine after they do so. They usually feel that they will simply be able to pick up the slack at a later time. Try to think this way about your tasks and ask yourself what the worst thing that can happen is if you decide to just do the task as planned. You might feel tired or stressed out, but both of these things are temporary. You need to realize when to push yourself and when to tap out. Most of the time, we have the ability to handle the things that we are trying to avoid. Our mindset just aims to push us in a more leisurely direction. When you can get your mindset in check and show yourself that doing things *now* isn't always bad, then you will be more likely to make the same choice again in the future.
- **Turn Your Dreams Into Goals:** Take 15 minutes to write down all of your dreams. No matter how crazy or impractical, write each

one down. These are the things that you want to do, regardless of what it takes to get there. Once you have them all written down, look over all of them. Depending on how many there are, narrow your list down to about half of them. Try to keep only the ones that are attainable. Once you narrow this down, you are going to narrow them down again. Think about which ones mean the most to you and pick five. With a timeline of one year, think about real ways that you can begin making progress toward all of them. Remember that they are goals now, not only trivial or unreachable dreams. When you can think about them in a realistic manner, you will also be taking yourself more seriously.

You aren't going to be able to overcome a procrastination habit in one day, but know that it is possible over time. Much like completing your long-term goals, you need to hang in there until the end if you want to be able to celebrate your results. Procrastination is not necessary for your success, so you can say goodbye as you replace the habit with better ones that will actually serve you. Instead of thinking about your tasks as burdens, you should be able to see them as small stepping stones that are allowing you to reach your larger goals. Without these small steps, you would never be able to accomplish these things.

It becomes very easy to tell yourself that procrastination is the answer, especially since it is celebrated in today's society. There are many different resources that you can utilize to take your mind off of life and turn your focus onto other things. This type of escapism is widely celebrated today as a lifestyle choice. When you see these things around you at all times, it becomes hard to resist them, even when you know that they aren't good for your overall success. You should not have to live a life that you need a vacation from. When you are in control over your own progress, you should be able to adequately make time for self-care.

Getting over a habit that is seen as normal can prove to be difficult, but it is not impossible. Don't think about tasks in terms of whether you can or cannot accomplish them. The only thought in your mind should be *how* you plan on accomplishing the task. As seen, there are many different ways that you can try to coax yourself out of your current procrastination behaviors and into more productive ones. Do not say that they will not work for you unless you have exhausted all of your options. Even then,

you should not give up. Use your creativity and innovation to come up with a way that you can respond to.

Many people like to focus on something that will motivate them when times get tough. It can be easy to give in to procrastination if you are the only one who has something to lose. Think about things from a bigger perspective—what will happen to your family if you procrastinate at work? Sometimes, it is necessary to think about things from this viewpoint. Imagine that you miss a deadline due to your procrastination habits. This can then lead you to trouble with your supervisor and even place you at risk of being fired. When you no longer have a job, you will be struggling to support your family. While this is a worst-case scenario, it is a possibility if your procrastination gets too bad.

Sometimes, fear is what drives us best. When we are placed under pressure, this can often bring out our best qualities because we have no other choice. When secret agents are out on a mission, they do not know what to expect most of the time. They mentally prepare themselves by expecting the worst, always having a plan in case something goes wrong. If the mission goes better than expected, then this serves as a pleasant victory. If it happens to go awry, then at least they were prepared. You can take your thoughts on procrastination and model them after this behavior. When you prepare for, but not fear, the worst, then you will always be ready for any outcome.

A lot of people misunderstand this tactic and become too focused on negative outcomes, therefore hindering their progress. It is important to remain realistic when you are thinking about all of the possibilities. While things might go wrong, you should know that you have what it takes to make them right again. Setbacks aren't the end of the world unless you allow them to be. This kind of mentality makes procrastination feel as though it will never be overcome. In reality, procrastination is a very minor setback that can be overruled easily if you put your mind to it. Knowing that you do not want to end up in a bad place, you can avoid this altogether by using your motivation right away. Do not wait to use it when you are experiencing a setback.

A here and now approach is always going to be the best approach to encourage yourself to take action. When you realize how much responsibility is on your shoulders, you should feel even more inspired to get to work on the task that you are putting off. When you finally

accomplish it, the victory is going to feel great. It can be very hindering to your self-esteem when you are constantly avoiding tasks. This means that you are constantly avoiding progress. Remember all of the tasks that you have learned so far. You wouldn't want to go backward in time and reverse these habits that you have worked so hard to form. Procrastination is only going to take you back, so avoiding it is always going to be the smart move.

Making Time for What Is Important

Time is an element that we all have to work with. No one is exempt from the ticking of the clock. Secret agents must perform tireless actions under the pressure of a deadline. They might be out in the field for days at a time while trying to complete their mission. One wrong move and they have wasted the time that they were given while ultimately not being able to complete the mission. In life, you aren't always going to be able to pick your own deadlines. Most of the time, these are set for you by a supervisor or by other people who need you to act quickly. A lot of people have disdain for this fact, but it is often something that you cannot change. Instead of feeling upset that you need to do things on a timeline, you can transform your thinking and your behaviors in order to better serve you.

There is no such thing as not having enough time to do the things that are important to you. We are all given the same hours in the day to work with. Starting from the very first hour of your day, consider if your actions are serving your best purpose. If you hit the snooze button when your alarm goes off, you are already setting yourself up for delays. Your alarm is an indication that it is time to start your day, no exceptions. Secret agents don't snooze several times before they get out of bed. They are trained to adhere to a very specific sleep schedule that allows them to always be on top of their game. Think about your alarm as something that is definitive. When you hear it, begin your morning routine.

It has actually been seen that snoozing your alarm makes you more tired. When your body is going through sleep cycles in only a few minutes of time, this will reset your sleep schedule. As you fall back asleep, your body is being sent a signal that states it is okay to get back to the REM cycle. However, when you are awakened only a few minutes later, this jolts your body into a forced state of being awake. This is why it can be so

hard to get out of bed in the morning, even despite getting that extra few minutes of sleep. Since your body isn't going to be getting rest from these few minutes, eliminating them is the smartest thing to do. Your body should only be awakened once by your alarm before you teach yourself that it is time to get up. When you allow yourself to snooze for an unlimited amount of times, this confuses your body's natural ability to wake up.

Think of a positive affirmation that you can recite to yourself as you are getting out of bed. This can be something simple, yet motivating. Use positive affirmations daily to reaffirm your cause. When you have a purpose, you are going to be a lot more motivated to get your day started. Positive affirmations are designed to allow you to feel that you do have a purpose, reminding you of what is currently important. No matter what you have going on in your life, you should be able to hype yourself up about it each morning. If you are going through something that is particularly difficult, you can tell yourself exactly why you are going to get through it. Turn to your inner strength to guide you. If you tell yourself that you can and will do something, you are going to be much more likely to make it happen that day.

Personal hygiene is something that should not be overlooked. Whether you usually shower in the morning or simply have a personal care routine that you complete before you leave for work, do your best not to skip any of these steps. When you are clean, you naturally feel better about yourself. Having poor hygiene is something that can attribute to lackluster feelings about yourself. When you feel this bad about yourself, you are going to be less likely to have motivation that you can harness throughout your day. Do your best to make yourself feel great before you walk out that door, even if it just involves wearing your favorite shirt to work. This necessary boost in your morale will keep you feeling great all day long.

If you normally shower at night, make the switch over to morning showers. Not only will this get your day off to a better start, but it will also serve as an additional way to wake up your mind and body. A shower is a refreshing step to any morning and it is your chance to make sure that your brain is in prime condition for all of the tasks ahead. If you need some extra time to make this possible, you are going to need to allow yourself to wake up earlier. People tend to be so resistant to this change, but once you make it a part of your daily routine, you will see how much it can benefit

you. Allowing yourself the alone time to shower and prepare for your day will allow you to get focused on the tasks to come.

Make sure that you eat a balanced meal before you begin any of your daily tasks. Eating breakfast at home is much smarter than taking your food on the go. Your body will truly get a chance to absorb all of the nutrients that you are providing it when it doesn't need to digest them in a hurry. Again, this might require that you start your mornings a little bit earlier. This is another task that will end up serving you very well once you get the hang of it. When your mind and body are ready and fueled, there will be fewer delays as you work through your daily tasks. Secret agents value their sharp minds more than anything, so in an effort to do the same, make sure that you are fueling up with foods that provide you with energy. Eating sugary or unhealthy breakfasts will only give you a temporary energy boost that is going to be followed by a crash. Avoid this by eating only clean foods.

Clean eating means that you do not go for foods that contain artificial ingredients or preservatives. By only eating the foods that will provide you with natural energy and nourishment, you won't have to worry about your body struggling to digest these filler ingredients. When you eat foods that are unhealthy, your body has a harder time breaking them down. This can often lead you to feel sluggish or weak. Keep your brain and your body strong by looking up recipes of meals that are simple and healthy. When you eat this way, you will notice the benefits right away. Instead of having to sort through the nutrients and the artificial ingredients, your body is going to be able to turn the food into fuel right away.

Getting out the door with enough time to get to work is the next important aspect of your time management. If you have ever started your day in a rush, you likely know what it means to be scatterbrained. This is not how you should start any day because it will give you more chances of making mistakes that can be avoided. A secret agent never arrives in a rush because they always use their time adequately. Given the time that you have to get to work, you should still aim to always be a little bit early. When you give yourself this small cushion, it will account for things that are out of your control, like traffic or car trouble. Being early to things feels a lot better than making it just in the nick of time. You will also have the necessary time to get situated and prepared for your day when you can

enter the office feeling like you have your time management under control.

Once you get to work, your awareness of time should be heightened. You will usually be given tasks that are placed on deadlines that you did not create. Make sure that you are utilizing a planner or a scheduler that you can adhere to at all times. When you aren't organized with your tasks, this gives you more room for errors. It could be devastating to let a task fall through the cracks simply because you didn't manage your time correctly, so make sure that you write everything down. This can appear to be tedious, but it is worth it. Allow your reputation for excellent time management to shine through. When your supervisors can see that you are managing your time efficiently, they will be sure to give you more tasks that they know you can handle. This promotes growth and progress. Everything is connected to the way that you are able to manage your time. What you must remember is that you control your actions at any given time. While you might have deadlines that are beyond your control, how you decide to handle them is on you.

Having a balance between professional time and personal time is necessary. When you focus on the things that you must do each day, don't forget about the things that you want to do. Your wants and needs are equally important. What matters most is how you balance them throughout your day. Of course, it wouldn't make sense to take a lunch break with your friends while you are in the middle of completing an important task for work. You need to use your prioritization skills to determine when you can appropriately give in to your wants. Finish the work that is pending before you shift your focus onto leisure. Once you give your brain this chance to unwind, it is going to be hard to get back into a working state of being. This is why your time to unwind should typically come after the workday is over.

This does not mean that you aren't going to be able to have fun while you are working, though. You can engage with your peers and have conversations that are morale-boosting without completely giving up on your concentration. Being a secret agent means working as a part of a team. Team members constantly interact with one another, both for professional reasons and personal reasons. It is within human nature to crave these bonds with other people and they can often lead us to great things. When you are personable, this means that people enjoy being

around you. Be this person for your peers without sacrificing your ability to get tasks done. By becoming a model employee, you are going to feel great and be recognized by those around you.

With time management comes balance. You need to have this balance if you are going to succeed in anything that you do. The above examples are all ways that you must properly distribute your time. If you ignore some or all of these tasks, you are going to end each day feeling as though you wasted it. Always remind yourself that you are in control of how you divide your time. There is no such thing as being too busy because this is a choice that your brain makes when it feels overwhelmed. If something is important or essential to your life, you will make the time for it. When you are able to change your habits regarding your time management, you will wonder why you haven't done so sooner. The days will feel longer and more practical. The best part is, you will be able to work on productivity as well as have personal time to spare. Don't let your mind shut you down when you feel that you want to do something. Anything is possible and you have the ability to prove this to yourself.

Chapter 5:

The Final Week

You have reached a very important stage in your journey—the final week of guided tasks. As you begin this week, know that you are going to get the most out of these tasks if you can really focus all of your energy onto them. You have already managed to complete 14 tasks, so you can use this as motivation to get you through the remainder of your tasks. To get you through this week, consider how an elite soldier or a special agent is a whole person, just like you. While they have a different role to fill than the average civilian, they still have their own personal sense of responsibilities along with their own basic needs and desires. Just because a secret agent can spend many dangerous hours out in the field, that doesn't mean that they still don't go home and crave simple comforts. They are human beings just like you, but they are responsible for keeping their focus at ultra-high levels.

This final week is going to challenge you in ways that you have yet to be challenged. It is a week of tasks that focus on the mental aspect of personal growth. Since you only use a fraction of your brain on a daily basis, these tasks are meant to show you that you can do so much more if you put in the effort. You should enter the week feeling optimistic and excited about these new tasks that you will be given. Your habits are nearly solidified after working on them for all this time so far. Each day that you complete is getting you one step closer to your goal. Once you finish the tasks, know that your journey is not even close to coming to an end. The only thing that will be ending is the structure that is being provided to you. After this point, you will have to hone the skills that you have learned, to create your own schedule and tasks.

You might feel a different kind of stress this week due to the nature of these tasks. Do not allow this to hinder you or prevent you from making progress. This is going to be a very natural process, but you might have to rely on your stress-relief methods in order to feel like you are still on track. Having a good sense of how to manage your stress is going to allow you to become more successful, not only with these tasks but any future tasks that you make for yourself. Stress is a part of everyday life and it cannot be avoided. However, you know yourself better than anyone. You

should be able to seek out the things that make you feel calm and grounded when you get into stressful situations.

Secret agents are no strangers to stress. They have one of the most stressful jobs in the world and in order to succeed, they need to utilize all of their most calming skills in order to break past the stress. When it comes to your daily life, stress should not be a driving force. It is a nuance that can be handled, just like any other task that you are faced with. Remember that you do not need to suppress any of your feelings in order to get rid of your stress. Allow yourself to feel everything because what you are feeling is valid. Instead of using your energy to block these stressors, channel it into productive and beneficial behaviors. Stress can be the number one thing that will break you during this week, so that presents an ongoing challenge. You will be able to succeed, though. If you keep reminding yourself that you are capable and ready, you will be in the right mindset to keep going.

Try not to compartmentalize the things that you are feeling. Instead, see each thought that you have as an indication of your mental health. If you are truly feeling too overwhelmed to act in a productive manner, then you will know that something needs to change. This is one of the biggest steps to take in order to live a stress-free life. When you can acknowledge that something must change for you to be the best version of yourself, you are already that much closer to reaching a solution. Ask yourself what you truly need. Try to think beyond making the stress disappear because this isn't the most realistic approach. For example, if you are given several hard tasks at work this week, think about what you can do to get through them more efficiently. They aren't going anywhere and neither is the stress that comes with them.

Building from the above example, you can use the knowledge that you have already learned to help you get through the stress. Consider your time management and procrastination. Are both of those things currently under control? If you are being ruled by the thought of putting things off or not having enough time to complete things, this is naturally going to stress you out. Giving yourself enough time to do the things that are important will relieve a little bit of this stress. Ask yourself if you are truly giving these tasks your all. It can be easy to say that you are, but you need to prove this to yourself. Think about concrete examples of how you are really making a difference in the things that you need to accomplish.

Use your knowledge of tracking your progress to reaffirm your skills. It might feel like you are drowning in work, but when you can show yourself that you are actually progressing, this will provide you with a much-needed boost of self-confidence. Your mindset is the key to your success; that hasn't changed. When you can approach any task, stressful or otherwise, with a positive mindset, you will be able to accomplish much more than you realize. Try not to sell yourself short by limiting what you think you can do. Just because you haven't done it before does not mean that it is impossible. Elite operatives accomplish impressive things on a daily basis that are way beyond what most would consider possible. Know that you have this ability, too. You can also impress yourself and those around you by your sheer determination and vigor.

Day 15: Become Culturally Aware

When was the last time that you visited a museum? This kind of cultural enrichment is necessary for all of us to experience, especially if it is a culture that is not our own. You can broaden your mind a great deal with a willingness to learn about other customs and cultures around the world. Just because you cannot travel to these places right now does not mean that you shouldn't take the time to learn about them and their history. Visiting museums can be a fun and educational way to expand your knowledge. It can become a productive pastime that also promotes learning. Do some research on the museums that you have in your local area and select the one that seems most interesting to you. Each week, you can make it a point to visit a new one.

A museum provides an excellent learning environment because it is controlled and quiet. No matter why other people decide to visit, their purpose is normally focused on learning or broadening their horizons. When you are surrounded by this similar type of energy, you are going to feel like you belong there too. Walking around a museum is an intense visual experience. You are going to see things that you have never seen before, and that is an exciting factor to consider. Do your best to truly understand what you are looking at instead of rushing through each exhibit. People who visit museums in a hurry are never going to get all of the benefits. You need to take your time and truly absorb everything that the museum has to offer.

Take your time to walk around and do an initial visual assessment of the art in front of you. Think about what the piece means to you before you read the information card. It is interesting to see how you interpret it with the cultural knowledge that you already have. Sometimes, there are no further explanations and the point is that you need to come to your own conclusions. This becomes a great exercise for your brain. As you read the information, use your attention to detail to store it in your memory. Try to remember as many different facts, titles, and dates as you can without writing anything down. This taps into the skills that you learned earlier in the month on past conversation recall.

You should be very familiar with the way that secret agents must rely on their memories to get them through their missions. For an extra motivational factor, pretend that you are on your own mission and that you

must remember these details for a very important cause. Challenge yourself to do your best even though visiting a museum tends to be a more relaxed experience. When you can give yourself an additional purpose, you are going to be getting a lot more out of the experience. Use your eye for detail to assist you with remembering these facts. Remember to take your time, as a rushed experience isn't going to benefit you nearly as much.

The following are some techniques that you can utilize to help improve your memory:

- **Consume Less Added Sugar:** You already know that the food you eat plays a big role in your brain's ability to function. Research has been done that shows people who eat processed food that contains added sugars are more likely to have poor memories. It has also been seen that those who eat this food have a lower overall brain volume. Eating right not only ensures that your body is being cared for, but your mind is as well. Plus, eating too much sugar can lead to negative health conditions in the future. Do your best to cut down on sugar immediately. Both your mind and body will be thankful when you do.
- **Take Fish Oil Supplements:** Fish is brain food, but you cannot eat fish every single day. In order to still receive the benefits of eating these healthy omega fats, you can take them in a supplement form. Fish oil pills are widely available, and they have been known to provide you with all of the same benefits you would receive if you ate fish. Studies have been done that show adults who were experiencing symptoms of early memory loss were able to significantly improve their memories after taking fish oil pills. Your brain will be able to function better if you get into the routine of taking these supplements regularly. You can start taking them right away without experiencing any side effects.
- **Practice Meditation Regularly:** Meditation does a lot more than simply clearing your mind. When you have enough room in your brain to receive new information, you will be able to remember it better. Think about trying to fit people into an already crowded elevator—it is not desirable and it is uncomfortable. This is the same way that your memory works. If you try to cram new information in when your brain isn't able to receive it, there isn't

going to be a point in doing so. When you have a clear headspace, you are going to be able to truly retain and remember this new information. It will serve as a much more practical experience for you in your daily life. Try to meditate at least once a day for several minutes at a time.

Day 16: Learn a Programming Language

At the beginning of this journey, you had a little bit of experience with learning new languages. From morse code to a language spoken in a foreign country, your brain has been receptive to these things. Now, you are going to teach yourself a different kind of language—one that is used for programming purposes. You might be wondering why this is going to serve you, and the answer to your question lies within the way that technology is so popular today. Nearly every aspect of your day relies on technology to make it happen. Technology has experienced so many huge advancements in the last decade and it shows no signs of slowing down soon. Getting up to speed on this technology is going to be useful for you to have a true understanding of how certain machines and processes work.

All of the biggest intelligence agencies around the world require their agents to be on top of all the latest technological advancements. Not being able to understand this technology could mean the difference between life and death for special agents. From learning how devices are programmed to understanding the way that they communicate with one another, special agents need to know this information. As a civilian, it doesn't hurt to know this information for yourself. When you can inform yourself of what is going on and how it works, you are going to likely take a more proactive approach to life in general. It is easy to be led by leaders and forces that promise to have your best interests in mind, but you can never be so sure. Taking matters into one's own hands is a way that a special agent would approach life and it is a great example of how you can do the same.

The following are some of the most useful programming languages you can learn. Take a look at these options and select the one that seems the most interesting. Remember, once you master one of them, you can always teach yourself another one in the future. This is a selection of some of the ones that people tend to teach themselves:

- Python: This is an easy language for beginners because it has fairly easy readability. It is used for machine learning and deep learning applications. Python is best known for its scientific applications, which means that you will be learning a language that is practical and useful. Apps that you know and use frequently such as YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest all use Python. It has also been used to create some of the most popular video games on

the market today. It is a free, open-sourced program which means that you can easily access it if you are interested in learning it. A part of the program comes with extensive support modules that become useful in order for you to truly grasp the concepts.

- Java: As far as programming languages go, Java has been around for a very long time. At any point when you have browsed the internet, you have likely encountered Java applications. It is one of the most commonly used programming languages to this day, and people who work in the tech field are typically required to learn it. The great thing about Java is that it can be used on many different platforms such as Mac, Windows, and Android. To this day, there are over 3 billion devices that require Java to work successfully. From this perspective, you can see just how common the language is and how useful it would be for you to learn it. Popular websites such as Amazon, Google, and Twitter all rely on Java to operate.
- C: One of the oldest and most commonly used programming languages is C. It serves as the root of many other programming languages and, for this reason, developers usually underestimate its usability. However, C remains on the top of many lists of useful programming languages to this day. It is widely used for things such as computer science and programming, serving an important task. While this might be a challenging language to teach yourself, it is important to learn about the roots of things.
- Ruby: With a reputation for being fairly easy to learn, you can teach yourself about Ruby. Developed in the 90s, Ruby was designed to be user-friendly from the very beginning. It is still flexible in terms of what you can do with it, but it allows you to feel that you can easily grasp the concepts of the language. Developers who use Ruby as a part of their jobs agree that it is very convenient and easy to learn. As long as you have the desire to solve problems and think in an abstract way, you should be able to master Ruby in no time.
- Swift: This is a newer language that was developed in 2014. Swift made it to a list of the most popular programming languages back in 2017 and many agree that it is easy to learn. Apple created the language for Linux and Mac applications, so it has a specific

purpose. It is open-source which makes it easier to understand and it takes a lot less coding than some other languages that have been created. Swift is best known for its use on websites such as WordPress and SoundCloud.

Day 17 - Explore Out the Surroundings/Go Reconnaissance

Today you will take the outside track. This is the road you haven't traveled much, a road of self-discovery that can begin at your doorstep, and extend as far as you wish. It requires getting off the couch and out of your home, and employing a change from established, deeply seated routines. It is an easy, yet influential way to challenge the status quo, and awaken all of your senses.

The outside track that you take today does not need to be a wilderness adventure; you can begin immediately, close to home. How many of us spend our lives going from our homes directly into cars, buses or trains; we travel to our places of work, or other activities, without experiencing our own surroundings.

Whether you are a city dweller in an apartment building, or live in a suburban single-family home, this opportunity to explore and get to really know your immediate environment is your priority today. With an open mind, a sense of curiosity and a willing spirit, this will be a day of discovery of your surroundings, and a deeper appreciation of yourself and your relationship with your environment. Be prepared to see, hear, smell, feel and experience more than you expect, and set fresh neural connections in your brain.

Step outside and start walking. Begin breathing in deeply and exhaling slowly. Practice mindfulness, the mindset of being in the moment, by perceiving every sensation of the natural world. What do you see? Take conscious note of different types of trees, shrubs, grass, potted plants, even weeds. Is there moss growing on the trees? If it is late summer or fall, are the leaves changing color, or are the leaves in the lighter colors of spring? Look up and note the color of the sky, the shapes and movement of the clouds. Next, what do you hear? Birds chirping, the wind blowing through the trees, the sound of your footsteps? Ignore unnatural sounds, like traffic, sirens, or airplanes.

Then become aware of what you feel: the wind on your face, the warmth of the sun or the feeling of drops of rain, or the bite of cold air and flakes of snow in winter. Be aware of your deeper breathing as you inhale and exhale, and consider what scents or fragrances are present. Repeat the

cycles of seeing, hearing, feeling, scenting. Continue being mindful of the nature around you for 10 to 15 minutes.

You have taken your first steps on the outside track. Make this process of raising your awareness of nature around you a daily habit. Your mind will adapt to this form of meditative focus, and your brain will begin to form new neural connections.

Sometime today, begin to plan the next level of mind-expansion, widening the scope of your outside track exploration, by trying different ways of traveling to work or school. Chances are, for example, you take the same route every day; so, plan some alternatives. A car driver has almost unlimited options, but if you use public transportation, you can try different ways of getting to the bus or train. It may make your walk longer, but that will contribute fitness and relaxation benefits. If you walk, jog, bike or scooter to your destination, you also have a wide range of different routes.

Use these alternatives to raise your awareness of less-familiar surroundings, and in the spirit of mindfulness, be conscious of the nature you are experiencing. Even in big cities, there are splashes of green in parks, and trees that line streets. In the extreme, in the ancient parts of Paris, centuries-old streets that are bare of trees have flower pots on most window sills, overflowing with flowers and abundant green vines of ivy.

Stepping outside to explore your immediate neighborhood, or varying your commute, are daily activities; brief forays on the outside track to become mindful. Now let's raise the bar and plan for more serious adventures to widen your scope and awaken deeply dormant senses of exploration.

When was the last time you headed into nature for a day, or several days? Hiking trips into a nearby forest can provide enriching single-day experiences, and even better are longer, overnight trips into nature; camping out, in a forest campground, or in the mountains, by lakes, in the desert, or on a beach. Obviously, where you live will determine what natural resources are accessible to you, but most of us live within a few hours of natural sites where we can camp out, cook over a campfire (if fire control laws permit), see thousands of stars at night, and maybe see a few meteors blaze across a dark sky. Not really up to tents and sleeping bags? Okay, consider renting a room in a lodge or cabin in a natural setting,

bringing you into nature, but with a pillow under your head, and a hot breakfast ready in the morning.

This can be a solo adventure of the outside track, or it can be shared with loved ones, including your spouse or life partner, your kids, or even your dog. Just as your own awakening experiences can change your attitudes and perceptions, think of how those attitudes can transform and uplift those closest to you. Consider the potential value of sharing your outside track experiences with friends, neighbors, or those with whom you work; imagine being on the edge of a mountain lake, inhaling cool morning air, with one or more of the people you normally see only in a work environment. Consider how your relationships can evolve, as you share these experiences, and imagine the bonding effects that will occur.

The key to successfully accomplishing these ventures into nature is disciplined planning, requiring analytical thinking, and since these are new, unfamiliar actions, they will challenge your brain and through neuroplasticity, cause it to rewire itself, creating new neural pathways that can take your outside track from unrealized to a new level of familiarity. As a bonus, you will find that the planning of these outings can be as interesting and fulfilling as the actual event. So, start thinking today about where to go, how to go, and who to take with you.

Day 18 - Speed Reading

You read extensively. You are reading right now. While our world continues to evolve from traditional newspapers, journals, magazines and books to digital versions, the amount of reading we do—or try to do—seems to increase almost exponentially. It is getting harder to keep up with the blogs, email, messaging, and news flashes on mobile devices, all on top of whatever magazines and journals we subscribe to, and the hardcover and softcover books we're always meaning to get to. If you are studying or attending classes, needless to say, there's plenty to not only read, but to comprehend, and to retain. Reading all that is available, important, and of interest, has become a challenge.

Coping leaves you with essentially two options: read selectively, and limit what you read, or, read faster, and more comprehensively. Unfortunately, our brains have become hard-wired to read the way we have always read, line-by-line, word-by-word, and any attempt to speed up that process usually does not work. Reading faster doesn't feel natural, and limits comprehension, especially if you are missing words or phrases as you try to read quickly. Add in some bad habits many of us have picked up along the way, including distractions and loss of concentration, and *regression* (re-reading what we just read).

Is it possible to change? Does speed reading really work? Can the existing neural networks in your brain be overwritten with new neural pathways? Professional opinions are mixed, with some techniques claiming measurable improvements in both speed and comprehension. But some authorities are questioning whether comprehension is improved or diminished. Fortunately, you can begin to learn speed reading, and see for yourself if your reading speed and comprehension improve. The key to success is practice, and disciplining yourself to focus, without distraction. There are three main speed-reading techniques:

- *Skimming* is one of the most common forms of speed reading; it is also considered to be one of the least effective when it comes to reading enjoyment and comprehension. Skimming involves letting your eyes pass quickly over the text, pausing to read a group of words, a sentence or a paragraph of interest, and then moving along, skimming again until the next interesting or relevant group of words. Some experts question the value of skimming, with

concerns that many important phrases may be missed; research conducted in the 1990s show that comprehension is limited when skimming.

- *Meta guiding* is one of the earlier speed-reading techniques. You may be familiar with the use of a finger or pointer that focuses vision on one word at a time. When we read, we visually see the words, but also subvocalize the words, which means we sound out the words, subconsciously. Subvocalization is considered to be a factor in limiting reading speed, but when it is eliminated, as it is when meta guiding is used, research shows that comprehension is reduced.
- *Rapid serial visual presentation (RSVP)* is a digital technique that flashes words on a screen, and as the reader becomes accustomed, the speed of the flashing words increases. This technique has been proven effective in its ability to increase reading speed, but as with other techniques, studies suggest that speed increases may be at the expense of comprehension.

Will speed reading training work for you? Given the potential upside, you are encouraged to give one of the available programs a try.

ReadSpeeder is a speed-reading course that applies the RSVP technique and is available for free, online at <https://readspeeder.com/>. The demonstration shows the difference in reading at the average speed of 200 WPM and post-training 600 WPM. At first exposure, the text at 600 WPM appears to fly by, but with training and practice, your ability to “grab” the phrases and comprehend what you are reading should become easier. Thirty minutes of training for 12 days can double your reading speed while improving comprehension. The technique does not try to force speed reading or diminish subvocalization, which could reduce comprehension. It encourages reading phrases and “idea chunks,” which can be grasped and understood faster than word-by-word reading. The service includes a library of 200 books for the speed-reading training, but you may also use your own text, if preferred.

Mind Tools proposes three alternatives to RSVP, preferring to subvert subvocalization, which they believe inhibits speed reading. Their

recommendations are at <https://www.mindtools.com/speedrd.html>. In brief summary:

The Pointer Method uses a finger sweeping across the page as you read, with the objective of keeping your focus on the words being read and not allowing distraction. This is the method originated by Dorothy Woods in the 1950s, and which brought the concept of speed reading into the public consciousness. Newer approaches, called *meta guiding*, use a card that slides down the page to reveal each line of text, and has the advantage of preventing reading ahead.

Tracker and Pointer is a variation on the Pointer Method, and relies on use of a pen, pencil or other pointing object, to sweep under the line you are reading. The objective is to sweep across, and read, each line in one second. Unsurprisingly, this may be difficult to achieve at first, but with practice, your reading speed is supposed to increase. You are simulating underlining the text, but not actually doing so.

Both The Pointer Method and Tracker and Pointer allege to prevent regression, which is the skipping back to reread sections of text you've already covered. Regression is a key cause of slowing reading speed.

Scanning or Previewing is among the fastest methods of speed reading, but also may be the least effective for comprehension. Your eyes skim quickly down the middle of the page, and pause to read words or phrases of interest, then resume the brisk skimming process. Some readers prefer to go directly to the first sentence of each paragraph. Scanning is reported to become more effective with training, and with the widening of the reader's peripheral vision.

Summing up, it's obvious that speed reading is controversial, subject to both enthusiastic acceptance and criticism. You are encouraged to try one of the above techniques, though, to see if you can improve your reading speed and comprehension. Start today by simply focusing on your reading and avoiding distractions, and breaking the habit of regression, or re-reading.

Day 19: Become Familiar With Martial Arts

The study of martial arts is not only a great way to stay in shape, but it is also a great way for you to practice self-discipline. Any given spy is going to be well-versed in at least one form of martial arts that will protect them as they navigate through their missions. Knowing self-defense and how to harness the power that you have is very important to being a successful soldier or secret agent. Such power requires very fast reflexes and this is another thing that martial arts can help with. Overall, any form of martial arts that you choose to learn will benefit you in all of these ways. Do some research and see which forms of martial arts sound most interesting to you. After you find one that you'd like to try, you can look for some classes that are offered in your local area.

Starting with your physical stamina, you will find that martial arts are not like any other workout plan that you have likely tried in the past. With a combination of many different moves and skills that you will practice, your body is never going to get used to the same exact routine. This allows you to build your muscle memory and truly challenge yourself as you progress with your rank. You need to have a lot of endurance to be successful at martial arts and this is something that you will learn over time. Do not become discouraged if you find that it is a lot harder than you were expecting. The point is that you aim to get better by practicing and taking classes regularly.

For your mental health, martial arts are also very important. As mentioned, this is not going to be like the typical workouts that you have tried before. There are certain principles that must be upheld when you practice martial arts. You need to have integrity and a hard-working attitude if you want to be successful. Those who enter their classes with a cocky attitude will simply end up getting challenged and burned out. It takes a lot of patience to be able to learn from each experience and to craft your skills every single time.

Martial arts can be a way for you to manage any unresolved anger that you normally hold onto. A lot of us lack a proper outlet for this anger, therefore holding it inside until it cannot be contained any longer. This is not a great solution because it will often cause conflict or other negative impacts on your life. When you are an angry person, this makes people want to interact with you less, in the fear that they are going to set you off.

You need to have enough self-discipline to know how to let go of and redirect the anger that you are feeling. Martial arts can teach you how to have better self-control and that will lead to better conflict resolution skills, allowing you to talk about things that you have feelings about.

It is always a good idea to prepare for the worst, even when you aren't necessarily expecting it. In today's society, there are many people who are willing to do crazy things in order to prove their points or express themselves. This can prove to be very dangerous at times because you cannot predict exactly how another person is going to react. This feeling can become similar to a ticking time bomb. If you are always on edge and expecting the worst, you are going to drive yourself crazy. Martial arts will give you the peace of mind that you can handle these situations if you encounter them. By utilizing your concentration and focus, you will be able to diffuse any situation.

Being able to help others who are in need is also a very practical skill. If you find yourself in the middle of a bad situation, you will be able to help others get to safety as you handle the conflict. While you do not always need to put yourself directly in the middle of danger, it does give you a greater purpose in knowing that you can make a difference.

The practice of martial arts is a part of a lifelong journey. Once you begin, you are always going to be learning. There never comes a point when you know everything that there is to know. This is what makes the study a great task to put on your list of new habits to learn. The things that allow you to keep growing as a person will continue to serve you well into the future.

Most people end up taking classes as a way to keep in shape, but then they realize that the study of martial arts actually involves more of a commitment. Challenge yourself to accept this commitment, even if you do not know exactly what it entails. By learning as you go, you are also going to be crafting your skills and becoming more confident in your abilities. You will become an inspiration for others who have always wanted to try martial arts but have never been brave enough to start the journey.

Day 20: Learn To Play Chess

Another surprising task that is actually going to benefit you greatly, chess is a game that requires a lot of tactical knowledge. While you need to learn how all of the pieces are played and where they are allowed to move, you will also need to be aware of your strategy. Even if you have unlimited knowledge about chess, that still does not automatically mean that you are going to be great at the game. It is more challenging and complex than this. Being great at chess is a combination of learning how your opponent is going to move and thinking about unlimited strategies that you can use against them. It takes a certain amount of patience and wit to truly succeed in the game.

Any game that requires this much thought will be great training for your brain. Instead of a mindless game designed to get you through periods of boredom, chess is a lot more than this. Not only can it be very fun if you play it often, but it can also help your critical thinking skills. You will also improve your memory and your cognitive abilities, a unique way to do both. Unlike most people believe, you do not have to study dry topics in order to obtain this kind of mental sharpness. By playing the game of chess, you can receive all of the same benefits while having a lot more fun.

When chess was first created, it was thought that it could only be a game played by geniuses and gentlemen. Many people believed that you had to be truly gifted in order to understand its rules. While this was true at first, chess is now more of a widespread game that allows you to show off your skills. In today's society, not many people decide to play chess as a way to pass the time, but you will likely find members of older generations who still gravitate toward the game. This task is meant to get you thinking and trying out new hobbies. If you can find other people to play with you, it will be even more beneficial to your success. There is nothing like having to think on the spot, especially when it is a game that you are unfamiliar with or not skilled at just yet.

The following are some of the tactical benefits that you will be able to experience once you get a hang of the game:

- **Powerful Brain Function:** As you already know, when you do not exercise your brain, it gets weaker. In order to stay on top of your game, you need to give yourself plenty of challenges in your

everyday life. Chess can easily become this challenge for you. It can be thought of as a mental workout and you know that you will get better at it the more that you play it. Chess is such a great brain game because it allows you to use both sides of the brain.

- **Sharper Memory:** Throughout this entire guide, there has been a big focus on keeping your memory sharp. You need to be able to remember details, big and small. The better you get at chess, the more you will remember about it. Starting from the very beginning, you might only know where the pieces can move and how to complete basic strategies. The more you play it, though, the more strategies you will learn. Every great chess player has several strategies in mind at any given moment.
- **Excellent Cognitive Abilities:** A broad term, your cognitive abilities are made up of motor skills, language, and perception. All of these are used when you engage in a game of chess. If you think about it, the game covers every part of each action. From identifying the pieces to remembering where they go next, you need to quickly put ideas together based on this information. It becomes like you are speaking a unique language that is the guiding voice of the game.
- **Thinking Strategically:** Chess is a game of strategy. As mentioned, you cannot learn all of the rules and automatically expect to win every game you play. A player who is less experienced than you might have a better strategy, therefore winning the game. You cannot make assumptions in chess and this is what keeps it interesting. Instead of trying to use power or force to win the game, you need to think strategically about every single move.
- **Improvement of Focus:** Pay attention! When you are playing chess, there is no chance for you to lose interest because, when you do, you might miss out on vital information. Not only are the moves you make important, but so are the moves that your opponent will make. One small move can change the entire course of the game, so you need to exercise your concentration and focus while you are playing. This is very good for your brain because you are normally led to believe that you need to multitask in order to get everything done in life. Chess is different; it encourages laser focus instead.

Chapter 6:

Reflections on Your Training

Day 21: Finding a Mentor

Take a moment of reflection and congratulate yourself! You have reached the end of the workbook. With only one final scheduled task, you can think back on all that you have learned so far. The journey was likely challenging, but you have made it to this point. As you continue on your path to success, the task for your last day is to find a mentor who is willing to guide you through the rest of your journey. Because there is nothing else scheduled, you must create your own schedule to follow. When you have a leader whom you can follow or gain inspiration from, you are going to be much more likely to keep up with these new habits that you have formed. For this reason, mentorship can be essential during this stage of your journey.

It can be very difficult to ask for help, especially when you have grown to become so self-sufficient. This is why obtaining a mentor can give you yet another push outside of your comfort zone. When you are able to select your own leader, you will know exactly what kind of behavior you would like to model yourself after. This is a big job and a big responsibility, so your mentor should be someone whom you can trust. Whether it is a person you have always looked up to or someone that you have recently met, ensure that their behavior is model behavior. Think about how they complete tasks and what goals they are currently aiming for.

When you find someone that you feel would be a good fit, the next step is to have a conversation with them. Explain what you have been doing and how you have been working on yourself. A positive response to your journey is essential because your mentor needs to be someone that ultimately believes in you. They should be able to provide you with words of encouragement when you are struggling and they will want to celebrate your successes that you accomplish. Your mentor definitely needs to be a positive individual who has a great sense of focus and organization. When you decide to have this conversation with them, remember that this is going to be somewhat of an interview process.

Once you explain what it is that you are trying to accomplish, you can ask them about their insights. See what they think about your efforts and

how they would suggest that you make a bigger impact. Your mentor always needs to be thinking one step ahead of the current stage of your journey. You do not need to follow anyone who is only going to lead you back to stagnant behaviors. When you find the right fit, you will know by the way it feels to interact with this person. A sense of humility is also essential because you do not want to assign someone this role if they only intend on bullying you or putting you down in the process.

Make a plan to meet with your mentor on a regular basis. While you do not need to speak to them every single day, it does help to check in often. Such regular accountability and mindfulness will keep you on track with your goals. During your meetings, you can explain how you've been feeling through your process and how you plan on making it even better. Your mentor should be someone off whom you can bounce ideas, no matter how unsure you are of them. Turning an idea to a reality is one of the best ways to experience personal growth. This is going to motivate you to stick with all of the habits that you have just learned and encourage you to create even more.

After becoming more familiar with the idea of mentorship, you will realize that you could be a mentor for someone too. This is how you will keep the ideas flowing. By helping others, you can learn a lot about yourself. It also feels great knowing that you are helping people in the process. Be open to this idea if someone approaches you and asks you to become their mentor. If the cycle never ends, creativity is going to continue to flow. Think about what the world would be like if it were full of strong thinkers and people who were aware of important topics. That's a world that will place value on all of the things that are most important to you. And you can influence it.

If you don't really know where to start, seek out people who inspire you at your workplace. This can be a supervisor or an employee who has a lot of experience. Normally, people are able to find those who would make suitable mentors in their given lines of work. Getting to know the personal reasons behind their success can be a real eye-opening experience for you. Not only will they be able to help and encourage you, but they will also be able to teach you what they know through the experiences that they've had. You might feel a little bit awkward approaching someone in this way, but this is how this final task is going to push you outside of your comfort zone again. Be confident in your reason for wanting a mentor.

Even spies and soldiers have mentors. Those individuals who are willing to teach them new skills definitely have a hand in their success. Nobody who wants to become an elite operative simply does so by trial and error. It is a lot more calculated and deliberate than this. By having a real example of what to do and how to do it, special agents feel more confident as they go about their tasks. Your mentor should allow you to feel the exact same way. We all get a little bit lost from time to time, but it is through good influences that we are able to find our way back to what we know is right. Don't punish yourself if you ever feel that you are straying from the path. Most likely, you are just in need of some additional direction.

Principles To Follow

In this section, I'll discuss some ideas that are going to further enhance the habits that you have learned. With anything good, you must put in effort to keep it that way. You can think about these principles as a form of maintenance that you can rely on. Simple yet effective, anything in your life can be guided by these principles. A mistake that is often made by those who are hungry for success is the idea that you always need to push yourself to a breaking point if you want to excel. You will find that moderation is actually the key to success. If you are able to carefully calculate these principles and apply them to your life in a realistic way, then you are going to end up a lot more successful than you would if you had taken the first approach.

Following principles in everyday life can seem formal, but you will find that it is actually a nice way to guide you without changing any ideas that you already have. Principles make your ideas even better and more successful. Once the structure of this workbook is gone, you are going to need to make sure that you replace it right away for a seamless transition. These principles can become your guide to creating that structure for yourself. You shouldn't feel lost and confused once you reach this point. You should actually feel empowered and ready to take on any new thing that comes your way.

Select Standard Approaches

While there has been a lot of talk about stepping outside of your comfort zone and thinking outside of the box, don't forget about the tried and true approaches that have been proven already. A standard approach is going to bring you standard results. This can sound like a negative outcome if you are aiming for greatness, but sometimes it is necessary to maintain a standard level of accomplishment before you are able to build upon it. Don't think about taking a standard approach as your final method of completing a task. You can instead use this as a building block in order to reach the next level of success. You need to master the basics before you can experiment, improvise, and innovate.

As long as you are able to keep your momentum going, you should be able to easily build on these accomplishments. Think about what you know as true when it comes to the different approaches that you can take. While these familiar options will lead you to results you can expect, you can use this information to see if taking a new approach would be worth the risk. Sometimes, this cannot be fully calculated. This becomes part of your decision-making factor. Are you going to use the approach that you know will work decently, or are you going to try something totally new that might result in failure? Different situations will call for different approaches.

Your comfort also plays a role in the principle. You might not be as confident with taking new approaches in the beginning, but if you are able to maintain the ones that work, you will then find the encouragement that you need to take it further. Be proud of the new skills that you have learned and the ones that you have yet to learn. They are going to give you the confidence to attempt these alternative approaches. No one should be able to convince you to do this except for yourself. You need to work as your own motivational factor.

You'll notice that the more you take on new approaches to problem-solving and reaching your goals, the more you will likely gravitate toward the same decisions in the future. This can be great when it comes to building your confidence and your skillset. Don't allow yourself to forget about the approaches that you first learned, though. All of these options should be available to you and should be kept in mind. You've likely had an experience where you couldn't solve a problem, but once you walked

away from it for a moment, you remembered an approach that you had forgotten about. With the problem solved, you have likely realized that thinking carefully can lead you to some conclusions that you already knew but had neglected to think about at the moment.

Without reading too much into the process, you will find that your gut instinct knows best. Having your different approaches handy, your gut is likely going to automatically guide you to the one that it believes will truly work. This isn't a fool-proof method, but listening to your instincts is important. You are having these thoughts for a reason, so it makes sense to explore them. Sometimes your subconscious decides to get involved based on information that has yet to reach your surface level of thinking. Being able to explore ideas in this way is an excellent sign that you have a lot of room to grow.

Whether you are trying to solve a problem at work or trying to decide what your family dynamic needs in order to remain successful, these are things that are going to require you to make decisions. The way that you act and handle each situation is going to shape the outcome. This can often feel like a lot of pressure, especially when you don't think that you know what you are doing. The difference now is that you will have self-confidence and assertiveness in order to make a decision and stick with it. Any choice that you make should be celebrated and provided with reasons to back them up. Think carefully and deliberately. If you get into this habit, you are going to be less likely to experience regretful thinking. Living life without regrets is a very freeing feeling that everyone should be able to experience.

Give More

You are likely familiar with the concept that you get what you give. This applies to many different aspects of life. The more time and effort that you put into something, the better results you will see. This is a very common way of thinking, but it can be easy to forget at times. If you have ever worked for a long time at something, but with minimal effort, you have probably been disappointed by the end result. This likely occurred because your focus wasn't in the right place. Instead of thinking about how you can be better and do better, you were likely only thinking about when the task was going to come to an end. While this might make the time pass by more quickly, it doesn't necessarily serve your purpose any better.

If you want to experience better results, you have to be willing to put in more effort. This can be done in moderation. This does not mean that you have to overexert yourself to the point of misery, but you do have to be open to the idea that sacrifices will be made in order to get ahead. This can mean anything from sacrificing your free time to sacrificing your energy. Both of these things are essential in getting you through your day, but they can be allocated to serve different purposes. If you are willing to give up some of your free time to devote it toward a difficult task, you are likely going to finish it sooner. This is how sacrifices should benefit you.

Many people think about the concept of sacrifices and immediately become resistant to the idea. This is because most will think about it in an all-or-nothing way. Remember, there is a middle ground to be met. You can sacrifice a little bit and turn it into a lot of productivity. Choosing to make sacrifices for what you believe is important does not mean that you need to give up every single thing that brings you joy. If you place this kind of pressure on yourself, you are going to be stressed out before you can even accomplish the task. By keeping your mind even, you will have a much more enjoyable experience.

Think about how much you give on a daily basis. What can you say that you devote to your tasks? You can probably vouch for the time that you spend on each one. Think about if that is enough. Do you often find yourself running out of time or wishing that you had more time? If so, this can mean that you need to work on your time management skills. As you have learned, there is always time for the things that are important. Since you are in control of how you spend your time, you should be able to

adjust your schedule in order to become more accommodating. You should never feel trapped by your lack of time. Know that this can always be changed if you truly want it to change.

Consider the different ways that you give. Not only can you provide time and effort toward situations, but you can also provide your attention. Paying attention to things is understandably very important, but this concept can also be skewed if you are paying attention to the wrong things. If you devote your thinking to negative outcomes or expectations, then what kind of message are you really sending yourself? Focus your intention on the things that are going to serve you and your situation best. Whether this is positive thinking or imagining a particularly positive outcome, you really need to make sure that you are in control of the way that you think.

Ask yourself if there is anything more that you can give to a situation that you have yet to give. By thinking about things that might not be material or tangible, you might realize that there are ways to further support your cause. If you never consider the possibility, you likely aren't going to change anything about the way that you think. Be open to exploring these ideas and do not treat them as burdens. Remember, you are aiming to make your tasks more efficient and more successful; this is going to be worth it.

Understand the Rules

No matter what you are doing, there are likely going to be certain rules involved. It is seldom that you can do whatever you want, whenever you want. Pay attention to these rules and regulations. Use your keen attention to detail to memorize them and become very familiar with them. Know that these rules are in place for a reason. Without order, everything would be a huge free-for-all, which would be entirely chaotic. When you can appreciate and observe the rules, you are going to be a lot more likely to understand the inner workings of any situation. With this knowledge, you will be able to come up with many strategies and ideas of how you can become successful in what you are trying to do.

You hear about people who make history by breaking the rules in order to get what they want. What you might not consider is that they had to fully grasp the concept of the rules in place before deciding how they were going to bypass them to make a difference. While your first instinct should not be to break or bend the rules, you do need to have a complete grasp on them before you decide what must be done. Only then will you be able to make the most informed decision. If you do not understand the rules, yet you are still trying to break them or bend them, this is only going to be a waste of your time. In the end, you might find out that it would've made more sense to just follow them in order to get what you want.

Try not to take on the role of the hero. This can be hard when you are yearning for something so deeply, but not every situation needs a hero. In most cases, you just need to be observant and mindful. When you don't take on a dramatic role, you will be a lot calmer in your approach. Something that once seemed difficult might actually seem very simple to you now. Understand that less can sometimes be more. When a secret agent is given a difficult mission, their first response isn't going to involve breaking the rules. Instead, they are going to think strategically about the best possible approach to the given situation. Keeping the rules in mind, they will then see what is in the mission's best interest. It isn't always an action-packed conclusion that they come to. Even secret agents flow with the status quo when they need to because doing so allows them to avoid detection. Still, they are able to find success continually.

It is a humbling experience to realize that you don't always have to break the boundaries. You can function on a normal level while still accomplishing great things. Your life is seldom going to mirror an action movie, so don't treat your decisions like a movie. Think about them carefully and logically. Knowing the rules that are in place, consider how they might be helpful to your situation. Ask yourself why these rules exist and how you can use them to your advantage. Many people find extremely clever ways to work with the rules when they take the time to grasp them fully. You can become one of these people if you get into the habit of acceptance.

When you have a complete sense of understanding, you are going to know immediately what options you have. It takes a lot of time to comprehend something if you aren't giving it a real shot. This is time that can be spent on more productive things. By going straight into the options stage, you won't find yourself stuck on this stage of trying to decipher what the rules mean and why they exist. You are going to be functioning at a higher frequency and at a more productive level.

By having an understanding of how things are meant to work, you can also inform others. Education is an incredibly valuable resource, and when you are able to provide guidance to others, they will automatically see you as a powerful force. With knowledge, you can appear to be a lot more confident than you actually feel. This isn't deceptive because you should be working on boosting your confidence levels on a daily basis. Allow yourself the pride of knowing that you can inform others.

Test Your Ideas

Being able to come up with many different ideas is a useful skill, but how will you know which ones actually work? One of the most common methods for finding out if an idea works is by trying it out. This is a method that makes sense, but there is a certain risk involved if you are trying it for the first time. Of course, that risk is failure. There are times when failure isn't very detrimental, but then there are other times when it can make or break an entire project. There is a middle ground for this principle that allows you to test out your ideas before you implement them. By testing them on a prototype, you will be able to see how successful it is without actually ruining your final outcome.

A prototype can appear in many different contexts depending on what you are trying out. For example, if you want to try a new time management skill, you can test it on sample tasks before you actually apply it to your timed task. By going through the motions of what you must do without putting anything at risk, you are giving yourself a platform on which to experiment. Thinking this way is likely something that you are not used to. Many people do not see the benefit of testing their ideas on prototypes because they simply see it as additional time wasted. Yet, if you think about the bigger picture, you will find that the time spent on the test will not amount to the time that it would take to do the task all over again. And if your test proves something to be successful, it can then alter every single task you do afterward, gaining you loads of time you never had available before.

Trying out any new idea is a risk, but it should be a calculated one. As long as you put in some amount of research beforehand, you will be on the right track to success. When you have an idea that involves social matters, this can complicate things a little bit. For things that are more mechanical, you should be able to come up with a prototype based on possible reactions that you are already aware of. When dealing with people, you never know how they are going to react. With all of the different personality types and character traits that a person can have, how will you truly be able to test a social idea? What you can do is gather a group of people who are entirely different. By providing yourself with a wide range of personality types, you are doing your best to prepare yourself for any outcome.

Another common mistake that is made while testing out ideas is the execution—you need to execute the idea properly if you truly want to test it. If you only put in half the effort, you aren't going to be receiving results that are relevant. Much like a dress rehearsal, performers are supposed to give it their all. They imagine that there is an audience watching them and they don't hold back when they run through all of their choreography. If they were to perform the choreography only halfway, they might end up forgetting a step or being unable to complete it fully while they are under the gaze of the actual audience. Give every experiment your all. Whether you are working on sample prototypes or with real people who plan on giving you input, you need to make sure that you are committed to your idea.

If you find that your idea has fallen flat, you don't have to scrap it! Take what you have learned and build from it. Allow yourself to rethink the idea and see what you can do to make it better. If you live your life without reaching this essential problem-solving stage, then you aren't going to be able to see any of your ideas through. Thinking of the idea was only part one. Part two comes from the work that you put into it. Try not to become discouraged. Instead, you can think of your idea as a work in progress. Know that you are putting the effort into it because you want to see it succeed.

You might find that you can come up with an entirely new idea after seeing how your original idea plays out. Original ideas are always to be thought of as drafts. Sometimes, you build from your draft. Other times, you create an entirely new model that was based on your draft. You need to be able to trust in the creative process if you want to succeed. Not everything is going to go according to plan, and that is okay. Allow yourself to become more comfortable with the unknown.

Show Sincere Interest

Your social skills play a huge role in your success. You might be a very skillful individual, but if you do not know how to interact with others, you'll be hindered in your ability to succeed. No matter what you do, there is going to come a time where you will need to form bonds with other people. Whether this is going to help your career or allow you to pitch new ideas to those who can take them further, being able to communicate with all types of people is important. In communication, there is one part talking and one part listening. The latter is what you need to focus on.

How well do you listen? You should be able to judge this by how well you remember conversations and details that other people reveal to you. If you have ever had a conversation that you forgot only a few hours later, then it is safe to say that you weren't practicing active listening. When you are listening in an active state of mind, your brain is actually receiving the information instead of skimming through it. This is the best state of listening that you can be in because it shows the other person that you respect what they are saying and it allows you to have a clearer picture of what is actually being said.

To become a better active listener, it really just comes down to how distracted you are while you are talking to others. Make sure that you maintain eye contact during the conversation. Looking off in another direction or glancing at your phone is only going to break your concentration. Plus, it can be seen as rude. When you are looking at the person who is talking to you, you'll be less likely to misunderstand them. Make sure that you can also hear what they are saying. If there is a lot of background noise, this is simply going to be another form of distraction that will hinder you.

As you are conversing with others, make sure that you repeat certain details of what they are telling you. While you don't need to repeat their entire statement, touching on key points of what is being said will show them that you are truly invested in the conversation. It will also assist you in committing the information to your memory. Nodding and agreeing with statements that are favorable will also help you become more active in your listening. When you can find common ground with the person who is talking to you, you build trust.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. When you want to know more about something or would like clarification, ask the other person before making your own assumptions. This will keep you from second-guessing any information that you were told. It will also further provide the person with a reason to believe that you truly care about what is being said. Questions should not be thought of as annoying or unnecessary. If you were explaining something important to someone else, you would likely feel positive if they asked you questions because this shows that they have an interest in what you are saying.

Your social skills will speak for themselves, even when you are not speaking. By acting polite and keen on listening, you should have no problems with your conversational skills. They are skills because they will get better the more that you practice them. If you don't have many conversations with many people, you are going to be limiting yourself. Make it a point to get social from time to time. Seek out the company of those you would like to learn more about. When you have a genuine interest in another person, the conversation is going to be a lot better than something that is forced. You will find that the more open you are with your conversational skills, the more open the other person will become. This all happens due to behaviors that are mirrored. For this reason, you should be the conversationalist that you would like to speak to yourself.

Start Changes From Within

As you navigate through the world with the skills and knowledge that you have learned, there will come a point when you realize that you want to make a difference. Making a change is a very big step, no matter what that entails. Always know that your change should be made because it is backed by a positive intention. For example, maybe you would like to change the way that your community handles suspicious individuals. An action resulting from this desire to make a change would be if you were to create a neighborhood watch program that would keep residents safe. This would be a change that was implemented for positive reasons.

You will realize that no matter what you would like to change, every single time it must start from within. You are the key to beginning any change you put your mind to. In order to change certain things, you might be required to change the minds of others. This can prove to be a very difficult task, discouraging if not done correctly. Instead of placing your beliefs in front of others as an option to take, you need to *show* them why they should see things your way. Prove to them that your beliefs matter enough to be taken seriously. Give them factual points that they can use to come to this conclusion on their own.

Force does not create change, as it is often thought. You can try to force others to see things your way, but this would only make you a bully. Force is not natural. The very idea behind it is that you are trying to make others see things or do things that they didn't want to see or do in the first place. Change has to be organic in order to become successful. An organic change will catch on a lot faster than something that you are constantly trying to force on others. Try to remember this, even in the most frustrating moments. You need to have patience if you truly want to convince others that this change is going to be a great thing.

If you can, show others what good can come from the change. Being able to list off the benefits is one thing, but actually having tangible proof is going to be a lot more effective. In order to achieve this, you might have to get creative. Do your best to come up with real ways to show people the benefits. You can use yourself as an example. How has the change impacted your life and your well-being? When you have gone through it yourself, this also makes you a source who is more likely to be trusted. People tend to value first-hand experiences.

Now that you know what you must do, think about the last change that you wanted to make. Was it successful? Why or why not? Try to learn from your past. If you had to do things differently, consider all of your options now. You might be able to revisit some of these ideas that you once had and approach them in a more effective way. It is amazing the clarity that you can receive when you try to change perspective.

If you are currently struggling with a change that you would like to make, even if it does not involve other people, you still need to start with yourself. Much like forming these new habits, the steps that you took to get to this point were steps that focused on self-improvement. When you are willing to make yourself better in order to aid the cause, then you are likely going to succeed. It takes a strong person to be able to admit that they can work on themselves. Take pride in this and use it to your advantage! The next change that you'd like to make, consider what you can do at the moment to change your own behavior or way of thinking. This approach will humble you and allow you to keep growing as a result of it. Changes will become easier to make as well.

Allow Yourself To Be Coached

This principle falls directly in line with your last task of the week. By having someone present in your life who can coach you through different situations, you are going to be improving your skills. Being able to take advice from people can prove difficult, especially if you are stubborn by nature. Try to let go of prideful and rigid complexes and realize that advice could be very valuable to you. Other people did not learn the same things that you have learned. They might know things that will truly be able to help you, but you will only be able to find out when you welcome their advice.

We all need some sort of coach in our lives in order to maintain order. For most people, a boss or supervisor fills this role. The person doesn't always have to be someone you work with, though. Your mentor, or even a loved one, can provide you with excellent advice if you are willing to listen. If someone has an opinion that can truly help you, then it shouldn't matter what role they play in your life. Try to be as open-minded as you can about these situations. You might discover that there was some great advice waiting for you all this time but you were just not ready to receive it.

Allowing someone to give you constructive criticism is a commendable action. A lot of people are so unwilling to be judged that they become defensive if anyone else tries to comment on what they are doing. Be humble and appreciative that someone is taking the time from their day to give you advice on how to make yours better. You don't need to take everything personally or as a challenge. A lot of the time, others do want you to succeed and they will speak up if they see a better way for you to do so.

Of course, any advice is only a matter of opinion. You need to take the person's credibility into account before you decide that you'd like to adopt the advice. See if you can get to the origin of their intention. Be aware of those who act like they want to help you but they actually want to hinder you. This is why taking advice or listening to criticism can be so scary for some people. Try your best not to let it hinder you. In most cases, advice can be taken with a grain of salt, so to speak. Except when the advice comes from your most trusted inner circle, you have to be vigilant in employing discernment, hearing advice both graciously and objectively.

As long as you are receptive to it, you can decide what you'd like to do with it later on. Sometimes, you don't need to take action at all. Every situation is going to be different.

The purpose of this principle is to show you that you can be receptive to these things without changing who you are at your core. You are still the same person with the same beliefs and ideas. When given advice, see if it actually applies to your situation. Being resistant to change can actually force you to put blinders up. If you can identify with the advice being given, then it likely applies to you in some way. Carefully consider this before you turn down any advice that is given to you. If the person ends up seeing something that you have yet to see, this is valuable information that you should learn more about. Talk to them and ask them why they see things this way.

Keep your mind open to any and all possibilities, even if you do not decide to make any changes based on the coaching that you were given. By being resistant to these situations, you will only limit yourself. You will also send a message to others that you are difficult to work with or inflexible toward change. Both of these things can damage your reputation if you are not careful. Know that you are still in control of your own progress, whether you take someone's advice or simply listen to it in order to dissect it; you will know what is best for you.

Conclusion

What matters most at this point is what you are aiming for, not who you are at this moment. You can grow as a person. You can teach yourself the necessary skills and habits that will allow you to become better. In doing all of this, you are aiming for a goal or for several goals. Keep this momentum going by giving yourself tasks long after you finish with this guide. Allow yourself to stay busy on the things that will build your skills and encourage productivity. Busy work isn't going to give you the same results, so avoid it! Only focus on the things that you know are important and essential to your success.

I have guided you through several different tasks that have challenged your brain in ways that it likely hasn't experienced in a very long time. With a focus on organization and productivity, these skills have taught you how to make your own schedule and keep the same level of success flowing through each day. When you give yourself deadlines and more expectations, you perform with a purpose. Instead of simply getting from point A to point B, you are going to be able to make use of every single minute in between.

You do not have to do the most in order to see the most success. By being careful with how you spend your time, you can actually gain a lot of valuable knowledge by simply providing yourself with a little bit of additional structure. Your days will no longer all blend together, as you will have various tasks that you can work on at any given time. Boredom is not something that you will have to deal with on this journey.

Know that inspiration can be found anywhere, at any time. Even if others do not have as much experience as you have, there are still plenty of ways that they can inspire you. From the way that they work to the strategies that they utilize, remember that you can always learn new skills by observing the way that other successful people operate. Work on building yourself up instead of continuously comparing yourself to those who are successful. As long as you do this, you will be able to stay in a positive mindset, which is essential. Positivity is what makes these tasks so enjoyable and what will keep you moving as you navigate through them.

Don't forget to give yourself credit for wanting to accomplish something like this in the first place. There was a driving force behind

your decision and it paid off. You were able to learn many new things while also learning even more about yourself in the process. That is something in itself that you can feel proud of. That feeling of pride should not stop there. Any time that you reach a goal, allow yourself to celebrate it. This will keep you motivated and wanting more.

Thank you very much for putting your trust in me and in this guide. A favorable review would be much appreciated. Other people love to hear success stories, so why not make your very own success story that you can share with the world? Be proud of all that you have accomplished and know that it doesn't have to end here. You can continue this lifestyle on your own now, relying on your motivation and determination in order to succeed. Remember that anything is possible if your mind is in the right place. Any distractions can be replaced with habits that will serve you, not only right now but for the rest of your life.

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